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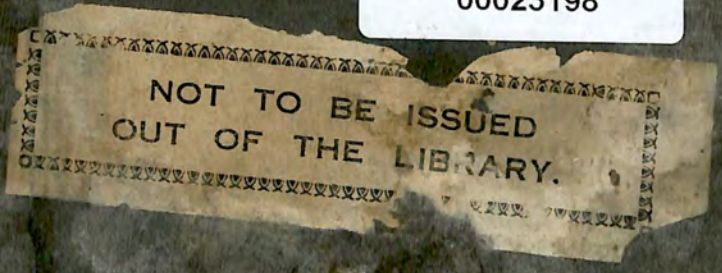
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STORIES

FROM THE

ITALIAN POETS:

WITH

LIVES OF THE WRITERS.

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BY LEIGH HUNT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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BOIARDO:

Critical Notice of his Life and Genius.

Critical Notice

OF

BOIARDO'S LIFE AND GENIUS.[1]

WHILE Pulci in Florence was elevating romance out of the street-ballads, and laying the foundation of the chivalrous epic, a poet appeared in Lombardy (whether inspired by his example is uncertain) who was destined to carry it to a graver

[1] The materials for the biography in this notice have been gathered from Tiraboschi and others, but more immediately from the copious critical memoir from the pen of Mr. Panizzi, in that gentleman's admirable edition of the combined poems of Boiardo and Ariosto, in nine volumes octavo, published by Mr. Pickering. I have been under obligations to this work in the notice of Pulci, and shall again be so in that of Boiardo's successor; but I must not a third time run the risk of omitting to give it my thanks (such as they are), and of earnestly recommending every lover of Italian poetry, who can afford it, to possess himself of this learned, entertaining, and only satisfactory edition of either of the Orlandos. The author writes an English almost as correct as it is elegant; and he is as painstaking as he is lively.

though still cheerful height, and prepare the way for the crowning glories of Ariosto. In some respects he even excelled Ariosto: in all, with the exception of style, shewed himself a genuine though immature master.

Little is known of his life, but that little is very pleasant. It exhibits him in the rare light of a poet who was at once rich, romantic, an Arcadian and a man of the world, a feudal lord and an indulgent philosopher, a courtier equally beloved by prince and people.

Matteo Maria Boiardo, Count of Scandiano, Lord of Arceto, Casalgrande, &c., Governor of Reggio, and Captain of the citadel of Modena (it is pleasant to repeat such titles when so adorned), is understood to have been born about the year 1434, at Scandiano, a castle at the foot of the Apennines, not far from Reggio, and famous for its vines.

He was of an ancient family, once lords of Rubiera, and son of Giovanni, second count of Scandiano, and Lucia, a lady of a branch of the Strozzi family in Florence, and sister and aunt of Tito and Erole Strozzi, celebrated Latin poets. His parents appear to have been wise people, for they gave him an education that fitted him equally for public and private life. He was even taught, or acquired, more Greek than was common to the

men of letters of that age. His whole life seems, accordingly, to have been divided, with equal success, between his duties as a servant of the dukes of Modena, both military and civil, and the prosecution of his beloved art of poetry,—a combination of pursuits which have been idly supposed incompatible. Milton's poetry did not hinder him from being secretary to Cromwell, and an active partisan. Even the sequestered Spenser was a statesman; and poets and writers of fiction abound in the political histories of all the great nations of Europe. When a man possesses a thorough insight into any one intellectual department (except, perhaps, in certain corners of science), it only sharpens his powers of perception for the others, if he chooses to apply them.

In the year 1469, Boiardo was one of the noblemen who went to meet the Emperor Frederick the Third on his way to Ferrara, when Duke Borso of Modena entertained him in that city. Two years afterwards, Borso, who had been only Marquis of Ferrara, received its ducal title from the Pope; and on going to Rome to be invested with his new honours, the name of our poet is again found among the adorners of his state. A few days after his return home this prince died; and Boiardo, favoured as he had been by him, appears

to have succeeded to a double portion of regard in the friendship of the new duke, Ercole, who was more of his own age.

During all this period, from his youth to his prime, our author varied his occupations with Italian and Latin poetry; some of it addressed to a lady of the name of Antonia Caprara, and some to another, whose name is thought to have been Rosa; but whether these ladies died, or his love was diverted elsewhere, he took to wife, in the year 1472, Taddea Gonzaga, of the noble house of that name, daughter of the Count of Novellara. In the course of the same year he is supposed to have begun his great poem. A popular court-favourite, in the prime of life, marrying and commencing a great poem nearly at one and the same time, presents an image of prosperity singularly delightful. By this lady Boiardo had two sons and four daughters. The younger son, Francesco Maria, died in his childhood; but the elder, Camillo, succeeded to his father's title, and left an heir to it,—the last, I believe, of the name. The reception given to the poet's bride, when he took her to Scandiano, is said to have been very splendid.

In the ensuing year the duke his master took a wife himself. She was Eleonora, daughter of the King of Naples; and the newly-married poet was

among the noblemen who were sent to escort her to Ferrara. For several years afterwards, his time was probably filled up with the composition of the *Orlando Innamorato*, and the entertainments given by a splendid court. He was appointed Governor of Reggio, probably in 1478. At the expiration of two or three years he was made Captain of the citadel of Modena; and in 1482 a war broke out with the Venetians, in which he took part, for it interrupted the progress of his poem. In 1484 he returned to it; but ten years afterwards was again and finally interrupted by the unprincipled descent of the French on Italy under Charles the Eighth; and in the December following he died. The *Orlando Innamorato* was thus left unfinished. Eight years before his decease the author published what he had written of it up to that time, but the first complete edition was posthumous. The poet was writing when the French came: he breaks off with an anxious and bitter notice of the interruption, though still unable to deny himself a last word on the episode which he was relating, and a hope that he should conclude it another time.

" Mentre che io canto, o Dio redentore,
Vedo l' Italia tutta a fiamma e foco,
Per questi Galli, che con gran valore
Vengon, per disertar non so che loco :

Però vi lascio in questo vano amore
Di Fiordespina ardente poco a poco:
Un' altra volta, se mi fia concesso,
Racconterovvi il tutto per espresso."

But while I sing, mine eyes, great God! behold
A flaming fire light all the Italian sky,
Brought by these French, who, with their myriads bold,
Come to lay waste, I know not where or why.
Therefore, at present, I must leave untold
How love misled poor Fiordespina's eye.[1]
Another time, Fate willing, I shall tell,
From first to last, how every thing befell.

Besides the *Orlando Innamorato*, Boiardo wrote a variety of prose works, a comedy in verse on the subject of Timon, lyrics of great elegance, with a vein of natural feeling running through them, and Latin poetry of a like sort, not, indeed, as classical in its style as that of Politian and the other subsequent revivers of the ancient manner, but perhaps not the less interesting on that account; for it is difficult to conceive a thorough copyist in style expressing his own thorough feelings. Mr. Panizzi, if I am not mistaken, promised the world a collection of the miscellaneous poems of Boiardo; but we have not yet had the pleasure of seeing them. In his life of the poet,

[1] She had taken a damsel in male attire for a man.

however, he has given several specimens, both Latin and Italian, which are extremely agreeable. The Latin poems consist of ten eclogues and a few epigrams; but the epigrams, this critic tells us, are neither good nor on a fitting subject, being satirical sallies against Nicolò of Este, who had attempted to seize on Ferrara, and been beheaded. Boiardo was not of a nature qualified to indulge in bitterness. A man of his chivalrous disposition probably misgave himself while he was writing these epigrams. Perhaps he suffered them to escape his pen out of friendship for the reigning branch of the family. But it must be confessed, that some of the best-natured men have too often lost sight of their higher feelings during the pleasure and pride of composition.

With respect to the comedy of *Timon*, if the whole of it is written as well as the concluding address of the misanthrope (which Mr. Panizzi has extracted into his pages), it must be very pleasant. Timon conceals a treasure in a tomb, and thinks he has baffled some knaves who had a design upon it. He therefore takes leave of his audience with the following benedictions:

" Pur ho scacciate queste due formiche,
Che raspavano l' oro alla mia buca,
Or vadan pur, che Dio le malediche.

Cotal fortuna a casa li conduca,
Che lor fiacchi le gambe al primo passo,
E nel secondo l' osso della nuca.

Voi altri, che ascoltate giuso al basso,
Chiedete, se volete alcuna cosa,
Prima ch' io parta, perchè mo vi lasso.

Benchè abbia l' alma irata e disdegnosa,
Da ingiusti oltraggi combattuta e vinta,
A voi già non l' avrò tanto ritrosa.

In me non è pietade al tutto estinta:
Faccia di voi la prova chi gli pare,
Sino alla corda, che mi trovo cinta;

Gli presterò, volendosi impiccare."

So! I've got rid of these two creeping things,
That fain would have scratched up my buried gold.
They're gone; and may the curse of God go with them!
May they reach home just in good time enough
To break their legs at the first step in doors,
And necks i' the second!—And now then, as to you,
Good audience,—groundlings,—folks who love low places,
You too perhaps would fain get something of me,
Ere I take leave.—Well;—angered though I be,
Scornful and torn with rage at being ground
Into the dust with wrong, I'm not so lost
To all concern and charity for others
As not to be still kind enough to part
With something near to me—something that's wound
About my very self. Here, sirs; mark this;—
[*Untying the cord round his waist.*
Let any that would put me to the test,
Take it with all my heart, and hang themselves.

The comedy of *Timon*, which was chiefly taken from Lucian, and one, if not more, of Boiardo's prose translations from other ancients, were written at the request of Duke Ercole, who was a great lover of dramatic versions of this kind, and built a theatre for their exhibition at an enormous expense. These prose translations consist of Apuleius's *Golden Ass*, Herodotus (the Duke's order), the *Golden Ass* of Lucian, Xenophon's *Cyropædia* (not printed), Emilius Probus (also not printed, and supposed to be Cornelius Nepos), and Riccobaldo's credulous *Historia Universalis*, with additions. It seems not improbable, that he also translated Homer and Diodorus; and Doni the bookmaker asserts, that he wrote a work called the *Testamento dell' Anima*, (the Soul's Testament): but Mr. Panizzi calls Doni "a barefaced impostor;" and says, that as the work is mentioned by nobody else, we may be "certain that it never existed," and that the title was "a forgery of the impudent priest."

Nothing else of Boiardo's writing is known to exist, but a collection of official letters in the archives of Modena, which, according to Tiraboschi, are of no great importance. It is difficult to suppose, however, that they would not be worth looking at. The author of the *Orlando Innamorato* could

hardly write, even upon the driest matters of government, with the aridity of a common clerk. Some little lurking well-head of character or circumstance, interesting to readers of a later age, would probably break through the barren ground. Perhaps the letters went counter to some of the good Jesuit's theology.

Boiardo's prose translations from the authors of antiquity are so scarce, that Mr. Panizzi himself, a learned and miscellaneous reader, says he never saw them. I am willing to get the only advantage in my power over an Italian critic, by saying that I have had some of them in my hands, —brought there by the pleasant chances of the bookstalls; but I can give no account of them.[1] A modern critic, quoted by this gentleman (Gamba, *Testi di Lingua*), calls the version of Apuleius "rude and curious;" but adds, that it contains "expressions full of liveliness and propriety." By "rude" is probably meant obsolete, and comparatively unlearned. Correctness of interpretation and classical nicety of style (as Mr. Panizzi observes) were the growths of a later age.

Nothing is told us by his biographers of the

[1] Crescimbeni himself had not seen the translation from Apuleius, nor, apparently, several others.—*Commentari, &c.* vol. ii. part ii. lib. vii. sect. xi.

person of Boiardo: and it is not safe to determine a man's *physique* from his writings, unless perhaps with respect to the greater or less amount of his animal spirits; for the able-bodied may write effeminately, and the feeblest supply the defect of corporal stamina with spiritual. Portraits, however, seem to be extant. Mazzuchelli discovered that a medal had been struck in the poet's honour; and in the castle of Scandiano (though "the halls where knights and ladies listened to the adventures of the Paladin are now turned into granaries," and Orlando himself has nearly disappeared from the outside, where he was painted in huge dimensions as if "entrusted with the wardenship") there was a likeness of Boiardo executed by Niccolò dell' Abate, together with the principal events of the *Orlando Innamorato* and the *Æneid*. But part of these paintings (Mr. Panizzi tells us) were destroyed, and part removed from the castle to Modena "to save them from certain loss;" and he does not add whether the portrait was among the latter.

From anecdotes, however, and from the poet's writings, we gather the nature of the man; and this appears to have been very amiable. There is an aristocratic tone in his poem, when speaking of the sort of people of whom the mass of soldiers

is wont to consist; and Foscolo says, that the Count of Scandiano writes like a feudal lord. But common soldiers are not apt to be the *elite* of mankind; neither do we know with how good-natured a smile the mention of them may have been accompanied. People often give a tone to what they read, more belonging to their own minds than the author's. All the accounts left us of Boiardo, hostile as well as friendly, prove him to have been an indulgent and popular man. According to one, he was fond of making personal inquiries among its inhabitants into the history of his native place; and he requited them so generously for their information, that it was customary with them to say, when they wished good fortune to one another, "Heaven send Boiardo to your house!" There is said to have been a tradition at Scandiano, that having tried in vain one day, as he was riding out, to discover a name for one of his heroes, expressive of his lofty character, and the word *Rodamonte* coming into his head, he galloped back with a pleasant ostentation to his castle, crying it out aloud, and ordering the bells of the place to be rung in its honour; to the astonishment of the good people, who took "Rodamonte" for some newly-discovered saint. His friend Paganelli of Modena, who wrote a Latin

poem on the *Empire of Cupid*, extolled the Governor of Reggio for ranking among the deity's most generous vassals,—one who, in spite of his office of magistrate, looked with an indulgent eye on errors to which himself was liable, and who was accustomed to prefer the study of love-verses to that of the law. The learned lawyer, his countryman Panciroli, probably in resentment, as Panizzi says, of this preference, accused him of an excess of benignity, and of being fitter for writing poems than punishing ill deeds; and in truth, as the same critic observes, "he must have been considered crazy by the whole tribe of lawyers of that age," if it be true that he anticipated the opinion of Beccaria, in thinking that no crime ought to be punished with death,,,

The great work of this interesting and accomplished person, the *Orlando Innamorato*, is an epic romance, founded on the love of the great Paladin for the peerless beauty Angelica, whose name has enamoured the ears of posterity. The poem introduces us to the pleasantest paths in that track of reading in which Milton has told us that his "young feet delighted to wander." Nor did he forsake it in his age.

"Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican with all his northern powers,,

> Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
> The city of Gallaphrone, from whence to win
> The fairest of her sex, Angelica."
>
> *Paradise Regained.*

The *Orlando Innamorato* may be divided into three principal portions:—the search for Angelica by Orlando and her other lovers; the siege of her father's city Albracca by the Tartars; and that of Paris and Charlemagne by the Moors. These, however, are all more or less intermingled, and with the greatest art; and there are numerous episodes of a like intertexture. The fairies and fairy-gardens of British romance, and the fabulous glories of the house of Este, now proclaimed for the first time, were added by the author to the enchantments of Pulci, together with a pervading elegance; and had the poem been completed, we were to have heard again of the traitor Gan of Maganza, for the purpose of exalting the imaginary founder of that house, Ruggero.

This resuscitation of the Helen of antiquity, under a more seducing form, was an invention of Boiardo's; so was the subjection of Charles's hero Orlando to the passion of love; so, besides the heroine and her name, was that of other interesting characters with beautiful names, which afterwards figured in Ariosto. This inventive fa-

culty is indeed so conspicuous in every part of the work, on small as well as great occasions, in fairy-adventures and those of flesh and blood, that although the author appears to have had both his loves and his fairies suggested to him by our romances of Arthur and the Round Table, it constitutes, next to the pervading elegance above mentioned, his chief claim to our admiration. Another of his merits is a certain tender gallantry, or rather an honest admixture of animal passion with spiritual, also the precursor of the like ingenuous emotions in Ariosto; and he furthermore set his follower the example, not only of good breeding, but of a constant heroical cheerfulness, looking with faith on nature. Pulci has a constant cheerfulness, but not with so much grace and dignity. Foscolo has remarked, that Boiardo's characters even surpass those of Ariosto in truth and variety, and that his Angelica more engages our feelings;[1] to which I will venture to add, that if his style is less strong and complete, it never gives us a sense of elaboration. I should take Boiardo to have been the healthier man, though of a less determined will than Ariosto, and perhaps, on the whole, less robust. You find in Boiardo almost

[1] Article on the *Narrative and Romantic Poems of the Italians*, in the *Quarterly Review*, No. 62, p. 527.

all which Ariosto perfected,—chivalry, battles, combats, loves and graces, passions, enchantments, classical and romantic fable, eulogy, satire, mirth, pathos, philosophy. It is like the first sketch of a great picture, not the worse in some respects for being a sketch; free and light, though not so grandly coloured. It is the morning before the sun is up, and when the dew is on the grass. Take the stories which are translated in the present volume, and you might fancy them all written by Ariosto, with a difference; the *Death of Agrican* perhaps with minuter touches of nature, but certainly not with greater simplicity and earnestness. In the *Saracen Friends* there is just Ariosto's balance of passion and levity; and in the story which I have entitled *Seeing and Believing*, his exhibition of triumphant cunning. During the lives of Pulci and Boiardo, the fierce passions and severe ethics of Dante had been gradually giving way to a gentler and laxer state of opinion before the progress of luxury; and though Boiardo's enamoured Paladin retains a kind of virtue not common in any age to the heroes of warfare, the lord of Scandiano, who appears to have recited his poem, sometimes to his vassals and sometimes to the ducal circle at court, intimates a smiling suspicion that such a virtue would be considered a

little rude and obsolete by his hearers. Pulci's wandering gallant, Uliviero, who in Dante's time would have been a scandalous profligate, had become the prototype of the court-lover in Boiardo's. The poet, however, in his most favourite characters, retained and recommended a truer sentiment, as in the instance of the loves of Brandimart and Fiordelisa; and there is a graceful cheerfulness in some of his least sentimental ones, which redeems them from grossness. I know not a more charming fancy in the whole loving circle of fairy-land, than the female's shaking her long tresses round Mandricardo, in order to furnish him with a mantle, when he issues out of the enchanted fountain.[1]

[1] " E' suoi capelli a sè sciolse di testa,
Che n' avea molti la dama gioconda;
Ed, abbracciato il cavalier con festa,
Tutto il coperse de la treccia bionda:
Così, nascósi entrambi di tal vesta,
Uscir' di quella fonte e la bell' onda."

Her locks she loosened from her lovely head,
For many and long had that same lady fair;
And clasping him in mirth as round they spread,
Covered the knight with the sweet shaken hair:
And so, thus both together garmented,
They issued from the fount to the fresh air.

Readers of the *Faerie Queene* will here see where Spenser has been, among his other visits to the Bowers of Bliss.

But Boiardo's poem was unfinished: there are many prosaical passages in it, many lame and harsh lines, incorrect and even ungrammatical expressions, trivial images, and, above all, many Lombard provincialisms, which are not in their nature of a "significant or graceful" sort,[1] and which shocked the fastidious Florentines, the arbiters of Italian taste. It was to avoid these in his own poetry, that Boiardo's countryman Ariosto carefully studied the Tuscan dialect, if not visited Florence itself; and the consequence was, that his greater genius so obscured the popularity of his predecessor, that a remarkable process, unique in the history of letters, appears to have been thought necessary to restore its perusal. The facetious Berni, a Tuscan wit full of genius, without omitting any particulars of consequence, or adding a single story except of himself, re-cast the whole poem of Boiardo, altering the diction of almost every stanza, and supplying introductions to the cantos after the manner of Ariosto; and the Florentine idiom and unfailing spirit of this re-fashioner's verse (though, what is very curious, not till after a long chance of its being overlooked itself, and a posthumous editorship which has left doubts on the authority of the text) gradually effaced almost

[1] Foscolo, *ut sup.* p. 528.

the very mention of the man's name who had supplied him with the whole staple commodity of his book, with all the heart of its interest, and with far the greater part of the actual words. The first edition of Berni was prohibited in consequence of its containing a severe attack on the clergy; but even the prohibition did not help to make it popular. The reader may imagine a similar occurrence in England, by supposing that Dryden had re-written the whole of Chaucer, and that his reconstruction had in the course of time as much surpassed the original in popularity, as his version of the *Flower and the Leaf* did, up to the beginning of the present century.

I do not mean to compare Chaucer with Boiardo, or Dryden with Berni. Fine poet as I think Boiardo, I hold Chaucer to be a far finer; and spirited, and in some respects admirable, as are Dryden's versions of Chaucer, they do not equal that of Boiardo by the Tuscan. Dryden did not apprehend the sentiment of Chaucer in any such degree as Berni did that of his original. Indeed, Mr. Panizzi himself, to whom the world is indebted both for the only good edition of Boiardo and for the knowledge of the most curious facts respecting Berni's *rifacimento*, declares himself unable to pronounce which of the two poems is the better one,

the original Boiardo, or the re-modelled. It would therefore not very well become a foreigner to give a verdict, even if he were able; and I confess, after no little consideration (and apart, of course, from questions of dialect, which I cannot pretend to look into), I feel myself almost entirely at a loss to conjecture on which side the superiority lies, except in point of invention and a certain early simplicity. The advantage in those two respects unquestionably belongs to Boiardo; and a great one it is, and may not unreasonably be supposed to settle the rest of the question in his favour; and yet Berni's fancy, during a more sophisticate period of Italian manners, exhibited itself so abundantly in his own witty poems, his pen at all times has such a charming facility, and he proved himself, in his version of Boiardo, to have so strong a sympathy with the earnestness and sentiment of his original in his gravest moments, that I cannot help thinking the two men would have been each what the other was in their respective times;— the Lombard the comparative idler, given more to witty than serious invention, under a corrupt Roman court; and the Tuscan the originator of romantic fictions, in a court more suited to him than the one he avowedly despised. I look upon them as two men singularly well matched. The

nature of the present work does not require, and the limits to which it is confined do not permit, me to indulge myself in a comparison between them corroborated by proofs; but it is impossible not to notice the connexion: and therefore, begging the reader's pardon for the sorry substitute of affirmative for demonstrative criticism, I may be allowed to say, that if Boiardo has the praise of invention to himself, Berni thoroughly appreciated and even enriched it; that if Boiardo has sometimes a more thoroughly charming simplicity, Berni still appreciates it so well, that the difference of their times is sufficient to restore the claim of equality of feeling; and finally, that if Berni strengthens and adorns the interest of the composition with more felicitous expressions, and with a variety of lively and beautiful trains of thought, you feel that Boiardo was quite capable of them all, and might have done precisely the same had he lived in Berni's age. In the greater part of the poem the original is altered in nothing except diction, and often (so at least it seems to me) for no other reason than the requirements of the Tuscan manner. And this is the case with most of the noblest, and even the liveliest passages. My first acquaintance, for example, with the *Orlando Innamorato* was through the medium of Berni;

and on turning to those stories in his version, which I have translated from his original for the present volume, I found that every passage but one, to which I had given a mark of admiration, was the property of the old poet. That single one, however, was in the exquisitest taste, full of as deep a feeling as any thing in its company (I have noticed it in the translated passage). And then, in the celebrated introductions to his cantos, and the additions to Boiardo's passages of description and character (those about Rodamonte, for example, so admired by Foscolo), if Berni occasionally shews a comparative want of faith which you regret, he does it with a regret on his own part, visible through all his jesting. Lastly, the singular and indignant strength of his execution often makes up for the trustingness that he was sorry to miss. If I were asked, in short, which of the two poems I should prefer keeping, were I compelled to choose, I should first complain of being forced upon so hard an alternative, and then, with many a look after Berni, retain Boiardo. The invention is his; the first earnest impulse; the unmisgiving joy; the primitive morning breath, when the town-smoke has not polluted the fields, and the birds are singing their "wood-notes wild." Besides, after all, one cannot be *sure* that

Berni could have invented as Boiardo did. If he could, he would probably have written some fine serious poem of his own. And Panizzi has observed, with striking and conclusive truth, that "without Berni the *Orlando Innamorato* will be read and enjoyed; without Boiardo not even the name of the poem remains."

Nevertheless this conclusion need not deprive us of either work. Berni raised a fine polished edifice, copied and enlarged after that of Boiardo; —on the other hand, the old house, thank Heaven, remains; and our best way of settling the question between the two is, to be glad that we have got both. Let the reader who is rich in such possessions look upon Berni's as one of his town mansions, erected in the park-like neighbourhood of some metropolis; and Boiardo's as the ancient country original of it, embosomed in the woods afar off, and beautiful as the Enchanted Castle of Claude—

"Lone sitting by the shores of old romance."

A late amiable man of wit, Mr. Stewart Rose, has given a prose abstract of Berni's *Orlando Innamorato*, with occasional versification; but it is hardly more than a dry outline, and was, indeed, intended only as an introduction to his version of the

Furioso. A good idea, however, of one of the phases of Berni's humour may be obtained from the same gentleman's abridgment of the *Animali Parlanti* of Casti, in which he has introduced a translation of the Tuscan's description of himself and of his way of life, out of his additions to Boiardo's poem. The verses in the prohibited edition of Berni's *Orlando*, in which he denounced the corruptions of the clergy, have been published, for the first time in this country, in the notes to the twentieth canto of Mr. Panizzi's Boiardo. They have all his peculiar wit, together with a *Lutheran* earnestness; and shew him, as that critic observes, to have been "Protestant at his heart."

Since writing this note I have called to mind that a translation of Berni's account of himself is to be found in Mr. Rose's prose abstract of the *Innamorato*.

THE

ADVENTURES OF ANGELICA.

Argument.

Angelica, daughter of Galafron, king of Cathay, the most beautiful of womankind, and a possessor of the art of magic, comes, with her brother Argalia, to the court of Charlemagne under false pretences, in order to carry away his knights to the country of her father. Her immediate purpose is defeated, and her brother slain; but all the knights, Orlando in particular, fall in love with her; and she herself, in consequence of drinking at an enchanted fountain, becomes in love with Rinaldo. On the other hand, Rinaldo, from drinking a neighbouring fountain of a reverse quality, finds his own love converted to loathing. Various adventures arise out of these circumstances; and the fountains are again drunk, with a mutual reversal of their effects.

THE

ADVENTURES OF ANGELICA.

It was the month of May and the feast of Pentecost, and Charlemagne had ordained a great jousting, which brought into Paris an infinite number of people, baptised and infidel; for there was truce proclaimed, in order that every knight might come. There was King Grandonio from Spain, with his serpent's face; and Ferragus, with his eyes like an eagle; and Balugante, the emperor's kinsman; and Orlando, and Rinaldo, and Duke Namo; and Astolfo of England, the handsomest of mankind; and the enchanter Malagigi; and Isoliero and Salamone; and the traitor Gan, with his scoundrel followers; and, in short, the whole flower of the chivalry of the age, the greatest in the world. The tables at which they feasted were on three sides of the hall, with the emperor's canopy midway at the top; and at that first table sat crowned heads; and down the table on the right sat dukes and marquises; and down the table on

the left, counts and cavaliers. But the Saracen nobles, after their doggish fashion, looked neither for chair nor bench, but preferred a carpet on the floor, which was accordingly spread for them in the midst.

High sat Charlemagne at the head of his vassals and his Paladins, rejoicing in the thought of all the great men of which they consisted, and holding the infidels cheap as the sands which are scattered by the tempest. To each of his lords, as they drank, he sent round, by his pages, gifts of enamelled cups of exquisite workmanship; and to every body some mark of his princely distinction; and so they were all sitting and hearing music, and feasting off dishes of gold, and talking of lovely things with low voices,[1] when suddenly there came into the hall four enormous giants, in the midst of whom was a lady, and behind the lady there followed a cavalier. She was a very lily of the field, and a rose of the garden, and a morning-star; in short, so beautiful that the like had never been seen. There was Galerana in the hall; there was Alda, the wife of Orlando; and Clarice, and Armellina the kind-hearted, and abundance of other ladies, all beautiful till she

[1] "Con parlar basso e bei ragionamenti."

made her appearance; but after that they seemed nothing. Every Christian knight turned his face that way; and not a Pagan remained on the floor, but arose and got as near to her as he could; while she, with a cheerful sweetness, and a smile fit to enamour a heart of stone, began speaking the following words:

"High-minded lord, the renown of your worthiness, and the valour of these your knights, which echoes from sea to sea, encourages me to hope, that two pilgrims who have come from the ends of the world to behold you, will not have encountered their fatigue in vain. And to the end that I may not hold your attention too long with speaking, let me briefly say, that this knight here, Uberto of the Lion, a prince renowned also for his achievements, has been wrongfully driven from out his dominions; and that I, who was driven out with him, am his sister, whose name is Angelica. Fame has told us of the jousting this day appointed, and of the noble press of knights here assembled, and how your generous natures care not to win prizes of gold or jewels, or gifts of cities, but only a wreath of roses; and so the prince my brother has come to prove his own valour, and to say, that if any or all of your guests, whether baptised or infidel, choose to meet him in the

joust, he will encounter them one by one, in the green meadow without the walls, near the place called the Horseblock of Merlin, by the Fountain of the Pine. And his conditions are these,—that no knight who chances to be thrown shall have license to renew the combat in any way whatsoever, but remain a submissive prisoner in his hands; he, on the other hand, if himself be thrown, agreeing to take his departure out of the country with his giants, and to leave his sister, for prize, in the hands of the conqueror."

Kneeling at the close of these words, the lady awaited the answer of Charlemagne, and every body gazed on her with astonishment. Orlando especially, more than all the rest, felt irresistibly drawn towards her, so that his heart trembled, and he changed countenance. But he felt ashamed at the same time; and casting his eyes down, he said to himself, "Ah, mad and unworthy Orlando! whither is thy soul being hurried? I am drawn, and cannot say nay to what draws me. I reckoned the whole world as nothing, and now I am conquered by a girl. I cannot get her sweet look out of my heart. My soul seems to die within me, at the thought of being without her. It is love that has seized me, and I feel that nothing will set me free;—not strength,

nor courage, nor my own wisdom, nor that of any adviser. I see the better part, and cleave to the worse."[1]

Thus secretly in his heart did the frank and noble Orlando lament over his new feelings; and no wonder; for every knight in the hall was enamoured of the beautiful stranger, not excepting

[1] *Video meliora, proboque, &c.* Writers were now beginning to pride themselves on their classical reading. The present occasion, it must be owned, was a very good one for introducing the passage from Horace. The previous words have an affecting ingenuousness; and, indeed, the whole stanza is beautiful:

" Io non mi posso dal cor dipartire
La dolce vista del viso sereno,
Perch' io mi sento senza lei morire,
E 'l spirto a poco a poco venir meno.
Or non mi vale forza, nè l' ardire
Contra d' amor, che m' ha già posto il freno;
Nè mi giova saper, ne altrui consiglio:
Il meglio veggio, ed al peggior m' appiglio."

Alas! I cannot, though I shut mine eyes,
Lose the sweet look of that delightful face;
The very soul within me droops and dies,
To think that I may fail to gain her grace.
No strong limbs now, no valour, will suffice
To burst the spell that roots me to the place:
No, nor reflection, nor advice, nor force;
I see the better part, and clasp the worse.

even old white-headed Duke Namo. Charlemagne himself did not escape.

All stood for awhile in silence, lost in the delight of looking at her. The fiery youth Ferragus was the first to exhibit symptoms in his countenance of uncontrollable passion. He refrained with difficulty from going up to the giants, and tearing her out of their keeping. Rinaldo also turned as red as fire; while his cousin Malagigi the enchanter, who had discovered that the stranger was not speaking truth, muttered softly, as he looked at her, "Exquisite false creature! I will play thee such a trick for this, as will leave thee no cause to boast of thy visit."

Charlemagne, to detain her as long as possible before him, made a speech in answer, in which he talked and looked, and looked and talked, till there seemed no end of it. At length, however, the challenge was accepted in all its forms; and the lady quitted the hall with her brother and the giants.

She had not yet passed the gates, when Malagigi the enchanter consulted his books; and that no means might be wanting to complete the counteraction of what he suspected, he summoned to his aid three spirits out of the lower regions. But how serious his look turned, how his very soul

within him was shaken, when he discovered that the most dreadful disasters hung over Charles and his court, and that the sister of the pretended Uberto was daughter of King Galafron of Cathay, a beauty accomplished in every species of enchantment, and sent there by her father on purpose to betray them all! Her brother's name was not Uberto, but Argalia. Galafron had given him a horse swifter than the wind, an enchanted sword, a golden lance, also enchanted, which overthrew all whom it touched,[1] and a ring of a virtue so extraordinary, that if put into the mouth, it rendered the person invisible, and if worn on the finger, nullified every enchantment. But beyond even all this, he gave him his sister for a companion; rightly judging, that every body that saw her would fall into the proposal of the joust; and trusting that, at the close of it, she would bring him the whole court of France into Cathay, prisoners in her hands.

[1] Ἀργυρέαις λόγχαισι μάχου, καὶ πάντα κρατήσεις.

"Make war with silver spears, and you'll beat all."

The reader will note the allegory or not, as he pleases. It is a very good allegory; but allegory, by the due process of enchantment, becomes matter of fact; and it is pleasant to take it as such.

Such, Malagigi discovered, was the plot of the accursed infidel hound, King Galafron.[1]

Meantime the pretended Uberto had returned to his station at the Horseblock of Merlin. He had had a beautiful pavilion pitched there; and under this pavilion he lay down awhile to refresh himself with sleep. His sister Angelica lay down also, but in the open air, under the great pine by the fountain. The four giants kept watch: and as she lay thus asleep, with her fair head on the grass, she appeared like an angel come down from heaven.

By this time Malagigi, borne by one of his demons, had arrived in the same place. He saw the beauty asleep by the flowery water, and the four giants all wide awake; and he said within his teeth,—"Brute scoundrels, I will take every one of you into my net without a blow."

Malagigi took his book, and cast a spell out of it; and in an instant the whole four giants were buried in sleep. Then, drawing his sword, he softly approached the young lady, intending to despatch her as quickly: but seeing her look so lovely as she slept, he paused, and considered within himself, and resolved to detain her in the

1 "Rè Galafron, il maledetto cane."

same state by enchantment, so long as it should please him. Laying down the naked sword in the grass, he again took his book, and read and read on, and still read on, and fancied he was locking up her senses all the while in a sleep unwakeable. But the ring of which I have spoken was on her finger. She had borrowed it of her brother; and a superior power rendered all other magic of no avail. A touch from Malagigi to prove the force of his spell awoke her, to the magician's consternation, with a great cry. She fled into the arms of her brother, whom it aroused; and, by the help of his sister's knowledge of enchantment, Argalia mastered and bound the magician. The book was then turned against him, and the place was suddenly filled with a crowd of his own demons, every one of them crying out to Angelica, "What commandest thou?"

"Take this man," said Angelica, "and bear him prisoner to the great city between Tartary and India, where my father Galafron is lord. Present him to him in my name, and say it was I that took him; and add, that having so taken the master of the book, I care not for all the other lords of the court of Charlemagne."

At the end of these words, and at one and the same instant, the magician was conveyed to the

feet of Galafron in Cathay, and locked up in a rock under the sea.

In due time the enamoured knights, according to agreement, came to the spot, for the purpose of jousting with the supposed Uberto, each anxious to have the first encounter, particularly Orlando, in order that he might not see the beauty carried off by another. But they were obliged to draw lots; and thirty other names appeared before his, the first of which was that of Astolfo the Englishman.

Now Astolfo was son of the king of England; and as I said before, he was the handsomest man in the world. He was also very rich and well bred, and loved to dress well, and was as brave as he was handsome; but his success was not always equal to his bravery. He had a trick of being thrown from his horse, a failing which he was accustomed to attribute to accident; and then he would mount again, and be again thrown from the saddle, in the boldest manner conceivable.

This gallant prince was habited, on the present occasion, in arms worth a whole treasury. His shield had a border of large pearls; his mail was of gold; on his helmet was a ruby as big as a chestnut; and his horse was covered with a cloth

all over golden leopards.[1] He issued to the combat, looking at nobody and fearing nothing; and on his sounding the horn to battle, Argalia came forth to meet him. After courteous salutations, the two combatants rushed together; but the moment the Englishman was touched with the golden lance, his legs flew over his head.

"Cursed fortune!" cried he, as he lay on the grass; "this is out of all calculation. But it was entirely owing to the saddle. You can't but acknowledge, that if I had kept my seat, the beautiful lady would have been mine. But thus it is when Fortune chooses to befriend infidels!"[2]

[1] The lions in the shield of England were leopards in the "olden time," and it is understood, I believe, ought still to be so,—as Napoleon, with an invidious pedantry, once permitted himself to be angry enough to inform us.

[2] The character of Astolfo, the germ of which is in our own ancient British romances, appears to have been completed by the lively invention of Boiardo, and is a curious epitome of almost all which has been discerned in the travelled Englishmen by the envy of poorer and the wit of livelier foreigners. He has the handsomeness and ostentation of a Buckingham, the wealth of a Beckford, the generosity of a Carlisle, the invincible pretensions of a Crichton, the self-commitals and bravery of a Digby, the lucklessness of a Stuart, and the *nonchalance* "under difficulties" of "*Milord What-then*" in Voltaire's *Princess of Babylon*, where the noble traveller is discovered philosophically reading the newspaper in his carriage after it was overturned. English beauty,

The four giants, who had by this time been disenchanted out of their sleep by Angelica, took up the English prince, and put him in the pavilion. But when he was stripped of his armour, he looked so handsome, that the lovely stranger secretly took pity on him, and bade them shew him all the courtesies that captivity allowed. He was permitted to walk outside by the fountain; and Angelica, from a dark corner, looked at him with admiration, as he walked up and down in the moonlight.[1]

The violent Ferragus had the next chance in the encounter, and was thrown no less speedily than Astolfo; but he did not so easily put up with the mischance. Crying out, "What are the emperor's engagements to me?" he rushed with

ever since the days of Pope Gregory, with his pun about Angles and Angels, has been greatly admired in the south of Europe—not a little, perhaps, on account of the general fairness of its complexion. I once heard a fair-faced English gentleman, who would have been thought rather effeminate-looking at home, called an "Angel" by a lady in Genoa.

[1] "Stava disciolto, senza guardia alcuna,
Ed intorno a la fonte sollazzava;
Angelica nel lume de la luna,
Quanto potea nascosa, lo mirava."

There is something wonderfully soft and *lunar* in the liquid monotony of the third line.

his sword against Argalia, who, being forced to defend himself unexpectedly, dismounted and set aside his lance, and got so much the worse of the fight, that he listened to proposals of marriage from Ferragus to his sister. The beauty, however, not feeling an inclination to match with so rough and savage-looking a person, was so dismayed at the offer, that, hastily bidding her brother meet her in the forest of Arden, she vanished from the sight of both, by means of the enchanted ring. Argalia, seeing this, took to his horse of swiftness, and dashed away in the same direction; Ferragus, in distraction, pursued Argalia; and Astolfo, thus left to himself, took possession of the golden lance, and again issued forth—not, indeed, with quite his usual confidence of the result, but determined to run all risks, in any thing that might ensue, for the sake of the emperor. In fine, to cut this part of the history short, Charlemagne, finding the lady and her brother gone, ordered the joust to be restored to its first intention; and Astolfo, who was as ignorant as the others of the treasure he possessed in the enchanted lance, unhorsed all comers against him like so many children, equally to their astonishment and his own.

The Paladin Rinaldo now learnt the issue of

the fight between Ferragus and the stranger, and galloped in a loving agony of pursuit after the fair fugitive. Orlando learnt the disappearance of Rinaldo, and, distracted with jealousy, pushed forth in like manner; and at length all three are in the forest of Arden, hunting about for her who is invisible.

Now in this forest were two enchanted waters, the one a running stream, and the other a built fountain; the first caused every body who tasted it to fall in love, and the other (so to speak) to fall *out* of love; say, rather, to feel the love turned into hate. To the latter of these two waters Rinaldo happened to come; and being flushed with heat and anxiety, he dismounted from his horse, and quenched, in one cold draught, both his thirst and his passion. So far from loving Angelica as before, or holding her beauty of any account, he became disgusted with its pursuit, nay, hated her from the bottom of his heart; and so, in this new state of mind, and with feelings of lofty contempt, he remounted and rode away, and happened to come on the bank of the running stream. There, enticed by the beauty of the place, which was all sweet meadow-ground and bowers of trees, he again quitted his saddle, and, throwing himself on the ground, fell fast asleep.

Unfortunately for the proud beauty Angelica, or rather in just punishment for her contempt, her palfrey conducted her to this very place. The water tempted her to drink, and, dismounting and tying the animal to one of the trees, she did so, and then cast her eyes on the sleeping Rinaldo. Love instantly seized her, and she stood rooted to the spot.

The meadow round about was all full of lilies of the valley and wild roses. Angelica, not knowing what to do, at length plucked a quantity of these, and with her white hand she dropped them on the face of the sleeper. He woke up; and seeing who it was, not only received her salutations with a change of countenance, but remounting his horse, galloped away through the thickest part of the forest. In vain the beautiful creature followed and called after him; in vain asked him what she had done to be so despised, and entreated him, at any rate, to take care how he went so fast. Rinaldo disappeared, leaving her to wring her hands in despair; and she returned in tears to the spot on which she had found him sleeping. There, in her turn, she herself lay down, pressing the spot of earth on which he had lain; and so, weeping and lamenting, yet blessing every flower and bit of

grass that he had touched, fell asleep out of fatigue and sorrow.

As Angelica thus lay, the good or bad fortune of Orlando conducted him to the same place. The attitude in which she was sleeping was so lovely that it is not even to be conceived, much less expressed. The very grass seemed to flower on all sides of her for joy; and the stream, as it murmured along, to go talking of love.[1] Orlando stood gazing like a man who had been transported to another sphere. "Am I on earth," thought he, "or am I in paradise? Surely it is I myself that am sleeping, and this is my dream."

But his dream was proved to be none, in a manner which he little desired. Ferragus, who had slain Argalia, came up raging with jealousy, and a combat ensued which awoke the sleeper. Terrified at what she beheld, she rushed to her

[1] "La qual dormiva in atto tanto adorno,
Che pensar non si può, non ch' io lo scriva:
Parea che l' erba a lei fiorisse intorno,
E d' amor ragionasse quella riva."

Her posture, as she lay, was exquisite
Above all words — nay, thought itself above:
The grass seemed flowering round her in delight,
And the soft river murmuring of love.

palfrey; and while the fighters were occupied with one another, fled away through the forest.

Fast fled the beauty in the direction taken by Rinaldo; nor did she cease travelling, by one conveyance or another, till she reached her own country, whither she had sent Malagigi. Him she freed from his prison, on condition that he would employ his art for the purpose of bringing Rinaldo to a palace of hers, which she possessed in an island; and accordingly Rinaldo was inveigled by a spirit into an enchanted barque, which he found on a sea-shore, and which conveyed him, without any visible pilot, into Joyous Palace (for so the island was called).

The whole island was a garden, fifteen miles in extent. It was full of trees and lawns; and on the western side, close to the sea, was the palace, built of a marble so clear and polished, that it reflected the landscape round about. Rinaldo, not knowing what to think of his strange conveyance, lost no time in leaping to shore; upon which a lady made her appearance, who invited him within. The house was a most beautiful house, full of rooms adorned with azure and gold, and with noble paintings; and within as well as without it were the loveliest flowers, the purest fountains, and a fragrance fit to turn sorrow to joy.

The lady led the knight into an apartment painted with stories, and opening to the garden through pillars of crystal with golden capitals. Here he found a bevy of ladies, three of whom were singing in concert, while another played on some foreign instrument of exquisite accord, and the rest were dancing round about them. When the ladies beheld him coming, they turned the dance into a circuit round about himself; and then one of them, in the sweetest manner, said, "Sir knight, the tables are set, and the hour for the banquet is come:" and with these words they all drew him, still dancing, across the lawn in front of the apartment, to a table that was spread with cloth of gold and fine linen, under a bower of damask roses, by the side of a fountain.[1]

Four ladies were already seated there, who rose and placed Rinaldo at their head, in a chair set with pearls. And truly indeed was he astonished. A repast ensued, consisting of viands the most delicate, and wines as fragrant as they were fine, drunk out of jewelled cups; and when it drew towards its conclusion, harps and lutes were heard in the distance, and one of the ladies said in the knight's ear, "This house, and all that you see in it, are yours. For you alone was it built, and

[1] Supremely elegant all this appears to me.

the builder is a queen; and happy indeed must you think yourself, for she loves you, and she is the greatest beauty in the world. Her name is Angelica."

The moment Rinaldo heard the name he so detested, disgust and wretchedness fell upon his heart, notwithstanding the joys around him. He started up with a changed countenance, and, in spite of all that the lady could say, broke off across the garden, and never ceased hastening till he reached the place where he landed. He would have thrown himself into the sea, rather than stay any longer in that island; but the enchanted barque was still on the shore. He sprang into it, and attempted instantly to push off, for he still saw nobody in it but himself; but the barque for a while resisted his efforts; till, on his feeling a wish to drown himself, or to do any thing rather than return to that detested house, it suddenly loosed itself from its moorings, and dashed away with him over the sea, as if in a fury.

All night did the pilotless barque dash on, till it reached, in the morning, a distant shore covered with a gloomy forest. Here Rinaldo, surrounded by enchantments of a very different sort from those which he had lately resisted, was entrapped into a pit.

The pit belonged to a castle which was hung with human heads, and painted red with blood; and as the Paladin was calling upon God to help him, a hideous white-headed old woman, of a spiteful countenance, made her appearance on the edge of the pit, and told him that he must fight with a monster born of Death and Desire.

"Be it so," said the Paladin. "Let me but remain armed as I am, and I fear nothing." For Rinaldo had with him his renowned sword Fusberta.[1]

The old woman laughed in derision. Rinaldo remained in the den all night, and next day was taken to a place where a portcullis was lifted up, and the monster rushed forth. He was a mixture of hog and serpent, larger than an ox, and not to be looked at without horror. He had eyes like a traitor, the hands of a man, but clawed, a beard dabbled with blood, a skin of coarse variegated colours, too hard to be cut through, and two horns on his temples, which he could turn on all sides of

[1] Sometimes called in the romances *Frusberta* (query, from *fourbir*, to burnish; or *froisser*, to crush?). The meaning does not seem to be known. I ought to have observed, in the notes to Pulci, that the name of Orlando's sword, *Durlindana* (called also *Durindana*, *Durandal*, &c.), is understood to mean *Hard-hitter*.

him at his pleasure, and which were so sharp that they cut like a sword.

Rising on his hind-legs, and opening a mouth six palms in width, this horrible beast fell heavily on Rinaldo, who was nevertheless quick enough to give it a blow on the snout which increased its fury. Returning the knight a tremendous cuff, it seized his coat of mail between breast and shoulder, and tore away a great strip of it down to the girdle, leaving the skin bare. Every successive rent and blow was of the like irresistible violence; and though the Paladin himself never fought with more force and fury, he lost blood every instant. The monster at length tearing his sword out of his hand, the Paladin surely began to think that his last hour was arrived.

Looking about to see what might possibly help him, he observed overhead a beam sticking out of a wall at the height of some ten feet. He took a leap more than human; and reaching the beam with his hand, succeeded in flinging himself up across it. Here he sat for hours, the furious brute continually trying to reach him. Night-time then came on with a clear starry sky and moonlight, and the Paladin could discern no way of escaping, when he heard a sound of something, he knew not what, coming through the air like a

bird. Suddenly a female figure stood on the end of the beam, holding something in her hand towards him, and speaking in a loving voice.

It was Angelica, come with means for destroying the monster, and carrying the knight away.

But the moment Rinaldo saw her, desperate as seemed to be his condition, he renounced all offers of her assistance; and at length became so exasperated with her good offices, especially when she opened her arms and offered to bear him away in them, that he threatened to cast himself down to the monster if she did not go away.[1]

Angelica, saying that she would lose her life rather than displease him, descended from the beam; and having given the monster a cake of wax which fastened up his teeth, and then caught and fixed him in a set of nooses she had brought for that purpose, took her miserable departure. Rinaldo upon this got down from the beam himself; and having succeeded, though with the greatest difficulty, in beating and squeezing the life out of the monster, dealt such havoc among the people of the castle who assailed him, that the horrible old woman, whose crimes had made her the crea-

[1] The force of aversion was surely never better imagined than in this scene of the opened arms of beauty, and the knight's preference of the most odious death.

ture's housekeeper, and led her to take delight in its cruelty, threw herself headlong from a tower. The Paladin then took his way forth, turning his back on the castle and the sea-shore.

Angelica returned to the capital of her father's dominion, Albracca; and the pertinacity of others in seeking her love being as great as that of hers for Rinaldo, she found King Galafron, in a short time, besieged there for her sake, by the fierce Agrican, king of Tartary.

In a short time a jealous feud sprang up between the loving friends Rinaldo and Orlando; and Angelica, torn with conflicting emotions, from her dread on her father's account as well as her own, and her aversion to every knight but her detester, was at one time compelled to apply to Orlando for assistance, and at another, being afraid that he would have the better of Rinaldo in combat, to send him away on a perilous adventure elsewhere, with a promise of accepting his love should he succeed.[1] Orlando went, but not before he had slain Agrican and delivered Albracca. Circumstances, however, again took him with her to a distance, as the reader will see, ere he could bring

[1] Legalised, I presume, by a divorce from the hero's wife, the fair Alda; who, though she is generally designated by that epithet, seems never to have had much of his attention.

her to perform her promise; and the Paladins in general having again been scattered abroad, it happened that Rinaldo a second time found himself in the forest of Arden; and here, without expecting it, he became an altered man; for he now tasted a very different stream from that which had given him his hate for Angelica; namely, the one which had made her fall in love with himself. He was led to do this by a very extraordinary adventure.

In the thick of the forest he had come upon a mead full of flowers, in which there was a naked youth, singing in the midst of three damsels, who were naked also, and who were dancing round about him. They had bunches of flowers in their hands, and garlands on their heads; and as they were thus delighting themselves, with faces full of love and joy, they suddenly changed countenance on seeing Rinaldo. "Behold," cried they, "the traitor! Behold him, villain that he is, and the scorner of all delights! He has fallen into the net at last." With these words they fell upon him with the flowers like so many furies; and tender as such scourges might be thought, every blow which the roses and violets gave him, every fresh stroke of the lilies and the hyacinths, smote him to the very heart, and filled his veins with fire.

The flowers in the hands of the nymphs being exhausted, the youth gave him a blow on the helmet with a tall garden-lily, which felled him to the earth; and so, taking him by the legs, and dragging him over the grass, his conqueror went the whole circuit of the mead with him, the nymphs taking the very garlands off their heads, and again scourging him with their white and red roses.[1]

At the close of this discipline, which left him more exhausted than twenty battles, his enemies suddenly developed wings from their shoulders, the feathers of which were of white and gold and vermilion, every feather having an eye in it, not like those in the peacock's feathers, but one full of life and motion, being a female eye, lovely and gracious. And with these wings they poised themselves a little, and so sprung up to heaven.[2]

The Paladin, more dead than alive, lay helpless among the flowers, when a fourth nymph came up to him, of inexpressible beauty. She told him that he had grievously offended the naked youth,

[1] This violent effect of weapons so extremely gentle is beautifully conceived.

[2] The "female eye, lovely and gracious," is charmingly painted *per se;* but of this otherwise thoroughly beautiful description I must venture to doubt, whether *living* eyes of any sort, instead of those in the peacock's feathers, are in good taste. The imagination revolts from life misplaced.

who was no other than Love himself; and added, that his only remedy was to be penitent, and to drink of the waters of a stream hard by, which he would find running from the roots of an olive-tree and a pine. With these words, she vanished in her turn like the rest; and Rinaldo, dragging himself as well as he could to the olive and pine, stooped down, and greedily drank of the water. Again and again he drank, and wished still to be drinking, for it took not only all pain out of his limbs, but all hate and bitterness out of his soul, and produced such a remorseful and doating memory of Angelica, that he would fain have galloped that instant to Cathay, and prostrated himself at her feet. By degrees he knew the place; and looking round about him, and preparing to remount his horse, he discerned a knight and a lady in the distance. The knight was in a coat of armour unknown to him, and the lady kneeling and drinking at a fountain, which was the one that had formerly quenched his own thirst; to wit, the Fountain of Disdain.

Alas! it was Angelica herself; and the knight was Orlando. She had allowed him to bring her into France, ostensibly for the purpose of wedding him at the court of Charlemagne, whither the hero's assistance had been called against Agramant

king of the Moors, but secretly with the object of discovering Rinaldo. Rinaldo, behold! is discovered; but the fatal averse water has been drunk, and Angelica now hates him in turn, as cordially as he detested her. In vain he accosted her in the humblest and most repentant manner, calling himself the unworthiest of mankind, and entreating to be allowed to love her. Orlando, disclosing himself, fiercely interrupted him; and a combat so terrific ensued, that Angelica fled away on her palfrey till she came to a large plain, in which she beheld an army encamped.

The army was Charlemagne's, who had come to meet Rodamonte, one of the vassals of Agramant. Angelica, in a tremble, related how she had left the two Paladins fighting in the wood; and Charlemagne, who was delighted to find Orlando so near him, proceeded thither with his lords, and parting the combatants by his royal authority, suppressed the dispute between them for the present, by consigning the object of their contention to the care of Namo duke of Bavaria, with the understanding that she was to be the prize of the warrior who should best deserve her in the approaching battle with the infidels.

[This is the last we hear of Angelica in the

unfinished poem of Boiardo. For the close of her history see its continuation by Ariosto in the present volume.]

THE

DEATH OF AGRICAN.

Argument.

Agrican king of Tartary, in love with Angelica, and baffled by the prowess of the unknown Orlando in his attempts to bring the siege of Albracca to a favourable conclusion, entices him apart from the battle into a wood, in the hope of killing him in single combat. The combat is suspended by the arrival of night-time; and a conversation ensues between the warriors, which is furiously interrupted by Agrican's discovery of his rival, and the latter's refusal to renounce his love. Agrican is slain; and in his dying moments requests baptism at the hand of his conqueror, who, with great tenderness, bestows it.

THE

DEATH OF AGRICAN.

THE siege of Albracca was going on formidably under the command of Agrican, and the city of Galafron was threatened with the loss of the monarch's daughter, Angelica, when Orlando, at his earnest prayer, came to assist him, and changing at once the whole course of the war, threw the enemy in his turn into transports of anxiety. Wherever the great Paladin came, pennon and standard fell before him. Men were cut up and cloven down, at every stroke of his sword; and whereas the Indians had been in full rout but a moment before, and the Tartars ever on their flanks, Galafron himself being the swiftest among the spurrers away, it was now the Tartars that fled for their lives; for Orlando was there, and a band of fresh knights were about him, and Agrican in vain attempted to rally his troops. The Paladin kept him constantly in his front, forcing him to attend to nobody else.

The Tartar king, who cared not a button for Galafron and all his army,[1] provided he could but rid himself of this terrible knight (whom he guessed at, but did not know), bethought him of a stratagem. He turned his horse, and made a show of flying in despair. Orlando dashed after him, as he desired; and Agrican fled till he reached a green place in a wood, with a fountain in it.

The place was beautiful, and the Tartar dismounted to refresh himself at the fountain, but without taking off his helmet, or laying aside any of his armour. Orlando was quickly at his back, crying out, "So bold, and yet such a fugitive! How could you fly from a single arm, and yet think to escape? When a man can die with honour, he should be glad to die; for he may live and fare worse. He may get death and infamy together."

The Tartar king had leaped on his saddle the moment he saw his enemy; and when the Paladin had done speaking, he said in a mild voice, "Without doubt you are the best knight I ever encountered; and fain would I leave you untouched for your own sake, if you would cease to hinder me

[1] "Che tutti insieme, e 'l suo Rè Galafrone,
Non li stimava quanto un vil bottone."

from rallying my people. I pretended to fly, in order to bring you out of the field. If you insist upon fighting, I must needs fight and slay you; but I call the sun in the heavens to witness, that I would rather not. I should be very sorry for your death."

The County Orlando felt pity for so much gallantry; and he said, "The nobler you shew yourself, the more it grieves me to think, that in dying without a knowledge of the true faith, you will be lost in the other world. Let me advise you to save body and soul at once. Receive baptism, and go your way in peace."

Agrican looked him in the face, and replied, "I suspect you to be the Paladin Orlando. If you are, I would not lose this opportunity of fighting with you, to be king of Paradise. Talk to me no more about your things of the other world; for you will preach in vain. Each of us for himself, and let the sword be umpire."

No sooner said than done. The Tartar drew his sword, boldly advancing upon Orlando; and a cut and thrust fight began, so long and so terrible, each warrior being a miracle of prowess, that the story says it lasted from noon till night. Orlando then, seeing the stars come out, was the first to propose a respite.

"What are we to do," said he, "now that daylight has left us?"

Agrican answered readily enough, "Let us repose in this meadow, and renew the combat at dawn."

The repose was taken accordingly. Each tied up his horse, and reclined himself on the grass, not far from one another, just as if they had been friends,—Orlando by the fountain, Agrican beneath a pine. It was a beautiful clear night; and as they talked together, before addressing themselves to sleep, the champion of Christendom, looking up at the firmament, said, "That is a fine piece of workmanship, that starry spectacle. God made it all,—that moon of silver, and those stars of gold, and the light of day and the sun,—all for the sake of human kind."

"You wish, I see, to talk of matters of faith," said the Tartar. "Now I may as well tell you at once, that I have no sort of skill in such matters, nor learning of any kind. I never could learn anything when I was a boy. I hated it so, that I broke the man's head who was commissioned to teach me; and it produced such an effect on others, that nobody ever afterwards dared so much as shew me a book. My boyhood was therefore passed as it should be, in horsemanship, and hunting, and

learning to fight. What is the good of a gentleman's poring all day over a book? Prowess to the knight, and prattle to the clergyman. That is my motto."

"I acknowledge," returned Orlando, "that arms are the first consideration of a gentleman; but not at all that he does himself dishonour by knowledge. On the contrary, knowledge is as great an embellishment of the rest of his attainments, as the flowers are to the meadow before us; and as to the knowledge of his Maker, the man that is without it is no better than a stock or a stone, or a brute beast. Neither, without study, can he reach anything like a due sense of the depth and divineness of the contemplation."

"Learned or not learned," said Agrican, "you might shew yourself better bred than by endeavouring to make me talk on a subject on which you have me at a disadvantage. I have frankly told you what sort of person I am; and I dare say, that you for your part are very learned and wise. You will therefore permit me, if you say anything more of such things, to make you no answer. If you choose to sleep, I wish you good night; but if you prefer talking, I recommend you to talk of fighting, or of fair ladies. And, by the way, pray tell me—are you, or are you not, may I ask, that Or-

lando who makes such a noise in the world? And what is it, pray, brings you into these parts? Were you ever in love? I suppose you must have been; for to be a knight, and never to have been in love, would be like being a man with no heart in his breast."

The County replied, "Orlando I am, and in love I am.[1] Love has made me abandon every thing, and brought me into these distant regions; and to tell you all in one word, my heart is in the hands of the daughter of King Galafron. You have come against him with fire and sword, to get possession of his castles and his dominions; and I have come to help him, for no object in the world but to please his daughter, and win her beautiful hand. I care for nothing else in existence."

Now when the Tartar king Agrican heard his antagonist speak in this manner, and knew him to be indeed Orlando, and to be in love with Angelica, his face changed colour for grief and jealousy, though it could not be seen for the darkness. His heart began beating with such violence, that he felt as if he should have died. "Well," said he to Orlando, "we are to fight when it is daylight, and one or the other is to be left here, dead on

[1] Berni has here introduced the touching words, "Would I were not so!" (Così non foss' io!)

the ground. I have a proposal to make to you; nay, an entreaty. My love is so excessive for the same lady, that I beg you to leave her to me. I will owe you my thanks, and give up the fight myself. I cannot bear that any one else should love her, and I live to see it. Why, therefore, should either of us perish? Give her up. Not a soul shall know it."[1]

"I never yet," answered Orlando, "made a promise which I did not keep; and, nevertheless, I own to you, that were I to make a promise like that, and even swear to keep it, I should not. You might as well ask me to tear away the limbs from my body, and the eyes out of my head. I could as soon live without breath itself, as cease loving Angelica."

Agrican had scarcely patience enough to let the speaker finish, ere he leaped furiously on horseback, though it was midnight. "Quit her," said he, "or die!"

Orlando, seeing the infidel getting up, and not being sure that he would not add treachery to fierceness, had been hardly less quick in mounting for the combat. "Never!" exclaimed he. "I

[1] This proposal is in the highest ingenuous spirit of the absurd wilfulness of passion, thinking that every thing is to give way before it, not excepting the same identical wishes in other people.

never could have quitted her if I would; and now I wouldn't if I could. You must seek her by other means than these."

Fiercely dashed their horses together, in the night-time, on the green mead. Despiteful and terrible were the blows they gave and took by the moonlight. There was no need of their looking out for one another, night-time though it was. Their business was to take as sharp heed of every movement, as if it had been noon-day.[1]

Agrican fought in a rage: Orlando was cooler. And now the struggle had lasted more than five hours, and dawn began to be visible, when the Tartar king, furious to find so much trouble given him, dealt his enemy a blow sharp and violent beyond conception. It cut the shield in two, as if it had been a cheesecake; and though blood could not be drawn from Orlando, because he was fated, it shook and bruised him, as if it had started every joint in his body.

His body only, however; not a particle of his soul. So dreadful was the blow which the Paladin gave in return, that not only shield, but every bit of mail on the body of Agrican, was broken in pieces, and three of his left ribs cut asunder.

[1] Very fine all this, I think.

The Tartar, roaring like a lion, raised his sword with still greater vehemence than before, and dealt a blow on the Paladin's helmet, such as he had never yet received from mortal man. For a moment it took away his senses. His sight failed; his ears tinkled; his frightened horse turned about to fly; and he was falling from the saddle, when the very action of falling jerked his head upwards, and with the jerk he regained his recollection.

"O my God!" thought he, "what a shame is this! how shall I ever again dare to face Angelica! I have been fighting, hour after hour, with this man, and he is but one, and I call myself Orlando. If the combat last any longer, I will bury myself in a monastery, and never look on sword again."

Orlando muttered with his lips closed and his teeth ground together; and you might have thought that fire instead of breath came out of his nose and mouth. He raised his sword Durindana with both his hands, and sent it down so tremendously on Agrican's left shoulder, that it cut through breast-plate and belly-piece down to the very haunch; nay, crushed the saddle-bow, though it was made of bone and iron, and felled man and horse to the earth. From shoulder to hip was Agrican cut through his weary soul, and he turned as white as ashes, and felt death upon him. He

called Orlando to come close to him with a gentle voice, and said, as well as he could, " I believe in Him who died on the Cross. Baptise me, I pray thee, with the fountain, before my senses are gone. I have lived an evil life, but need not be rebellious to God in death also. May He who came to save all the rest of the world, save me! He is a God of great mercy."

And he shed tears, did that king, though he had been so lofty and fierce.

Orlando dismounted quickly, with his own face in tears. He gathered the king tenderly in his arms, and took and laid him by the fountain, on a marble cirque which it had; and then he wept in concert with him heartily, and asked his pardon, and so baptised him in the water of the fountain, and knelt and prayed to God for him with joined hands.

He then paused and looked at him; and when he perceived his countenance changed, and that his whole person was cold, he left him there on the marble cirque by the fountain, all armed as he was, with the sword by his side, and the crown upon his head.

I think I may anticipate the warm admiration of the reader for the whole of this beautiful episode, particularly its close. " I

think," says Panizzi, "that Tasso had this passage particularly in view when he wrote the duel of Clorinda and Tancredi, and her conversion and baptism before dying. The whole passage, from stanza xii. (where Agrican receives his mortal blow) to this, is beautiful; and the delicate proceeding of Orlando in leaving Agrican's body armed, even with the sword in his hand, is in the noblest spirit of chivalry."—Edition of *Boiardo and Ariosto*, vol. iii. page 357.

The reader will find the original in the Appendix No. I.

In the course of the poem (canto xix. stanza xxvi.) a knight, with the same noble delicacy, who is in distress for a set of arms, borrows those belonging to the dead body, with many excuses, and a kiss on its face.

THE

SARACEN FRIENDS.

A FAIRY LOVE-TALE.

Argument.

Prasildo, a nobleman of Babylon, to his great anguish, falls in love with his friend's wife, Tisbina; and being overheard by her and her husband threatening to kill himself, the lady, hoping to divert him from his passion by time and absence, promises to return it on condition of his performing a distant and perilous adventure. He performs the adventure; and the husband and wife, supposing that there is no other way of her escaping the consequences, resolve to take poison; after which the lady goes to Prasildo's house, and informs him of their having done so. Prasildo resolves to die with them; but hearing, in the mean time, that the apothecary had given them a drink that was harmless, he goes and tells them of their good fortune; upon which the husband is so struck with his generosity, that he voluntarily quits Babylon for life, and the lady marries the lover. The new husband subsequently hears that his friend's life is in danger, and quits the wife to go and deliver him from it at the risk of his own, which he does.

This story, which has resemblances to it in Boccaccio and Chaucer, is told to Rinaldo while riding through a wood in Asia, with a damsel behind him on the same horse. He has engaged to combat in her behalf with a band of knights; and the lady relates it to beguile the way.

The reader is to bear in mind, that the age of chivalry took delight in mooting points of love and friendship, such as in after-times would have been out of the question; and that the parties in this story are Mahometans, with whom divorce was an easy thing, and caused no scandal.

THE

SARACEN FRIENDS.

IROLDO, a knight of Babylon, had to wife a lady of the name of Tisbina, whom he loved with a passion equal to that of Tristan for Iseult;[1] and she returned his love with such fondness, that her thoughts were occupied with him from morning till night. Among other pleasant circumstances of their position, they had a neighbour who was accounted the greatest nobleman in the city; and he deserved his credit, for he spent his great riches in doing nothing but honour to his rank. He was pleasant in company, formidable in battle, full of grace in love; an open-hearted, accomplished gentleman.

This personage, whose name was Prasildo, happened to be of a party one day with Tisbina, who were amusing themselves in a garden, with a game in which the players knelt down with their

[1] The hero and heroine of the famous romance of *Tristan de Leonois*.

faces bent on one another's laps, and guessed who it was that struck them. The turn came to himself, and he knelt down to the lap of Tisbina; but no sooner was he there, than he experienced feelings he had never dreamt of; and instead of trying to guess correctly, took all the pains he could to remain in the same position.

These feelings pursued him all the rest of the day, and still more closely at night. He did nothing but think and sigh, and find the soft feathers harder than any stone. Nor did he get better as time advanced. His once favourite pastime of hunting now ceased to afford him any delight. Nothing pleased him but to be giving dinners and balls, to make verses and sing them to his lute, and to joust and tournay in the eyes of his love, dressed in the most sumptuous apparel. But above all, gentle and graceful as he had been before, he now became still more gentle and graceful—for good qualities are always increased when a man is in love. Never in my life did I know them turn to ill in that case. So, in Prasildo's, you may guess what a super-excellent person he became.

The passion which had thus taken possession of this gentleman was not lost upon the lady for want of her knowing it. A mutual acquaintance

was always talking to her on the subject, but to no purpose; she never relaxed her pride and dignity for a moment. The lover at last fell ill; he fairly wasted away; and was so unhappy, that he gave up all his feastings and entertainments. The only pleasure he took was in a solitary wood, in which he used to plunge himself in order to give way to his grief and lamentations.

It happened one day, early in the morning, while he was thus occupied, that Irolde came into the wood to amuse himself with bird-catching. He had Tisbina with him; and as they were coming along, they overheard their neighbour during one of his paroxysms, and stopped to listen to what he said.

"Hear me," exclaimed he, "ye flowers and ye woods. Hear to what a pass of wretchedness I am come, since that cruel one will hear me not. Hear, O sun that hast taken away the night from the heavens, and you, ye stars, and thou the departing moon, hear the voice of my grief for the last time, for exist I can no longer; my death is the only way left me to gratify that proud beauty, to whom it has pleased Heaven to give a cruel heart with a merciful countenance. Fain would I have died in her presence. It would have comforted me to see her pleased even with that proof

of my love. But I pray, nevertheless, that she may never know it; since, cruel as she is, she might blame herself for having shewn a scorn so extreme; and I love her so, I would not have her pained for all her cruelty. Surely I shall love her even in my grave."

With these words, turning pale with his own mortal resolution, Prasildo drew his sword, and pronouncing the name of Tisbina more than once with a loving voice, as though its very sound would be sufficient to waft him to Paradise, was about to plunge the steel into his bosom, when the lady herself, by leave of her husband, whose manly visage was all in tears for pity, stood suddenly before him.

"Prasildo," said she, "if you love me, listen to me. You have often told me that you do so. Now prove it. I happen to be threatened with nothing less than the loss of life and honour. Nothing short of such a calamity could have induced me to beg of you the service I am going to request; since there is no greater shame in the world than to ask favours from those to whom we have refused them. But I now promise you, that if you do what I desire, your love shall be returned. I give you my word for it. I give you my honour. On the other side of the wilds

of Barbary is a garden which has a wall of iron. It has four gates. Life itself keeps one; Death another; Poverty the third; the fairy of Riches the fourth. He who goes in at one gate must go out at the other opposite; and in the midst of the garden is a tree, tall as the reach of an arrow, which produces pearls for blossoms. It is called the Tree of Wealth, and has fruit of emeralds and boughs of gold. I must have a bough of that tree, or suffer the most painful consequences. Now, then, if you love me, I say, prove it. Prove it, and most assuredly I shall love you in turn, better than ever you loved myself."

What need of saying that Prasildo, with haste and joy, undertook to do all that she required? If she had asked the sun and stars, and the whole universe, he would have promised them. Quitting her in spite of his love, he set out on the journey without delay, only dressing himself before he left the city in the habit of a pilgrim.

Now you must know, that Iroldo and his lady had set Prasildo on that adventure, in the hope that the great distance which he would have to travel, and the change which it might assist time to produce, would deliver him from his passion. At all events, in case this good end was not effected

before he arrived at the garden, they counted to a certainty on his getting rid of it when he did; because the fairy of that garden, which was called the Garden of Medusa, was of such a nature, that whosoever did but look on her countenance forgot the reason for his going thither; and whoever saluted, touched, and sat down to converse by her side, forgot all that had ever occurred in his life-time.

Away, however, on his steed went our bold lover; all alone, or rather with Love for his companion; and so [illegible]ing hard till he came to the Red Sea, he [illegible]k ship, and journeyed through Egypt, and came to the mountains of Barca, where he overtook an old grey-headed palmer.

Prasildo told the palmer the reason of his coming, and the palmer told him what the reader has heard about the garden; adding, that he must enter by the gate of Poverty, and take no arms or armour with him, excepting a looking-glass for a shield, in which the fairy might behold her beauty. The old man gave him other directions necessary for his passing out of the gate of Riches; and Prasildo, thanking him, went on, and in thirty days found himself entering the garden with the greatest ease, by the gate of Poverty.

The garden looked like a Paradise, it was so

full of beautiful trees, and flowers, and fresh grass. Prasildo took care to hold the shield over his eyes, that he might avoid seeing the fairy Medusa; and in this manner, guarding his approach, he arrived at the Golden Tree. The fairy, who was reclining against the trunk of it, looked up, and saw herself in the glass. Wonderful was the effect on her. Instead of her own white-and-red blooming face, she beheld that of a dreadful serpent. The spectacle made her take to flight in terror; and the lover, finding his object so far gained, looked freely at the tree, and climbed it, and bore away a bough.[1]

With this he proceeded to the gate of Riches. It was all of loadstone, and opened with a great noise. But he passed through it happily, for he made the fairy who kept it a present of half the bough; and so he issued forth out of the garden, with indescribable joy.

Behold our loving adventurer now on his road

[1] "Mr. Rose observes, that Medusa may be designed by Boiardo as the 'type of conscience;' and he is confirmed in his opinion by the circumstance mentioned in this canto (12, lib. i. stan. 39) of Medusa not being able to contemplate the reflection of her own hideous appearance, though beautiful in the sight of others. I fully agree with him."—PANIZZI, *ut sup.*, vol. iii. p. 333.

home. Every step of the way appeared to him a thousand. He took the road of Nubia to shorten the journey; crossed the Arabian Gulf with a breeze in his favour; and travelling by night as well as by day, arrived one fine morning in Babylon.

No sooner was he there, than he sent to tell the object of his passion how fortunate he had been. He begged her to name her own place and time for receiving the bough at his hands, taking care to remind her of her pronise; and he could not help adding, that he should die if she broke it.

Terrible was the grief of Tisbina at this unlooked-for news. She threw herself on her couch in despair, and bewailed the hour she was born. "What on earth am I to do?" cried the wretched lady; "death itself is no remedy for a case like this, since it is only another mode of breaking my word. To think that Prasildo should return from the garden of Medusa! who could have supposed it possible? And yet, in truth, what a fool I was to suppose any thing impossible to love! O my husband! little didst thou think what thou thyself advisedst me to promise!"

The husband was coming that moment towards the room; and overhearing his wife grieving in

this distracted manner, he entered and clasped her in his arms. On learning the cause of her affliction, he felt as though he should have died with her on the spot.

"Alas!" cried he, "that it should be possible for me to be miserable while I am so dear to your heart. But you know, O my soul! that when love and jealousy come together, the torment is the greatest in the world. Myself—myself, alas! caused the mischief, and myself alone ought to suffer for it. You must keep your promise. You must abide by the word you have given, especially to one who has undergone so much to perform what you asked him. Sweet face, you must. But oh! see him not till after I am dead. Let Fortune do with me what she pleases, so that I be saved from a disgrace like that. It will be a comfort to me in death to think that I alone, while I was on earth, enjoyed the fond looking of that lovely face. Nay," concluded the wretched husband, "I feel as though I should die over again, if I could call to mind in my grave how you were taken from me."

Iroldo became dumb for anguish. It seemed to him as if his very heart had been taken out of his breast. Nor was Tisbina less miserable. She was as pale as death, and could hardly speak to

him, or bear to look at him. At length turning her eyes upon him, she said, "And do you believe I could make my poor sorry case out in this world without Iroldo? Can he bear, himself, to think of leaving his Tisbina? he who has so often said, that if he possessed heaven itself, he should not think it heaven without her? O dearest husband, there is a way to make death not bitter to either of us. It is to die together. I must only exist long enough to see Prasildo! Death, alas! is in that thought; but the same death will release us. It need not even be a hard death, saving our misery. There are poisons so gentle in their deadliness, that we need but faint away into sleep, and so, in the course of a few hours, be delivered. Our misery and our folly will then alike be ended."

Iroldo assenting, clasped his wife in distraction; and for a long time they remained in the same posture, half stifled with grief, and bathing one another's cheeks with their tears. Afterwards they sent quietly for the poison; and the apothecary made up a preparation in a cup, without asking any questions; and so the husband and wife took it. Iroldo drank first, and then endeavoured to give the cup to his wife, uttering not a word, and trembling in every limb; not because he was

afraid of death, but because he could not bear to ask her to share it. At length, turning away his face and looking down, he held the cup towards her, and she took it with a chilled heart and trembling hand, and drank the remainder to the dregs. Iroldo then covered his face and head, not daring to see her depart for the house of Prasildo; and Tisbina, with pangs bitterer than death, left him in solitude.

Tisbina, accompanied by a servant, went to Prasildo, who could scarcely believe his ears when he heard that she was at the door requesting to speak with him. He hastened down to shew her all honour, leading her from the door into a room by themselves; and when he found her in tears, addressed her in the most considerate and subdued, yet still not unhappy manner, taking her confusion for bashfulness, and never dreaming what a tragedy had been meditated.

Finding at length that her grief was not to be done away, he conjured her by what she held dearest on earth to let him know the cause of it; adding, that he could still die for her sake, if his death would do her any service. Tisbina spoke at these words; and Prasildo then heard what he did not wish to hear. "I am in your hands," answered she, "while I am yet alive. I am bound

to my word, but I cannot survive the dishonour which it costs me, nor, above all, the loss of the husband of my heart. You also, to whose eyes I have been so welcome, must be prepared for my disappearance from the earth. Had my affections not belonged to another, ungentle would have been my heart not to have loved yourself, who are so capable of loving; but (as you must well know) to love two at once is neither fitting nor in one's power. It was for that reason I never loved you, baron; I was only touched with compassion for you; and hence the miseries of us all. Before this day closes, I shall have learnt the taste of death." And without further preface she disclosed to him how she and her husband had taken poison.

Prasildo was struck dumb with horror. He had thought his felicity at hand, and was at the same instant to behold it gone for ever. She who was rooted in his heart, she who carried his life in her sweet looks, even she was sitting there before him, already, so to speak, dead.

"It has pleased neither Heaven nor you, Tisbina," exclaimed the unhappy young man, "to put my best feelings to the proof. Often have two lovers perished for love; the world will now behold a sacrifice of three. Oh, why did you not

make a request to me in your turn, and ask me to free you from your promise? You say you took pity on me! Alas, cruel one, confess that you have killed yourself, in order to kill me. Yet why? Never did I think of giving you displeasure; and I now do what I would have done at any time to prevent it, I absolve you from your oath. Stay, or go this instant, as it seems best to you."

A stronger feeling than compassion moved the heart of Tisbina at these words. "This indeed," replied she, "I feel to be noble; and truly could I also now die to save you. But life is flitting; and how may I prove my regard?"

Prasildo, who had in good earnest resolved that three instead of two should perish, experienced such anguish at the extraordinary position in which he found all three, that even her sweet words came but dimly to his ears. He stood like a man stupified; then begged of her to give him but one kiss, and so took his leave without further ado, only intimating that her way out of the house lay before her. As he spake, he removed himself from her sight.

Tisbina reached home. She found her husband with his head covered up as she left him; but when she recounted what had passed, and the

courtesy of Prasildo, and how he had exacted from her but a single kiss, Iroldo got up, and removed the covering from his face, and then clasping his hands, and raising it to heaven, he knelt with grateful humility, and prayed God to give pardon to himself, and reward to his neighbour. But before he had ended, Tisbina sunk on the floor in a swoon. Her weaker frame was the first to undergo the effects of what she had taken. Iroldo felt icy chill to see her, albeit she seemed to sleep sweetly. Her aspect was not at all like death. He taxed Heaven with cruelty for treating two loving hearts so hardly, and cried out against Fortune, and life, and Love itself.

Nor was Prasildo happier in his chamber. He also exclaimed against the bitter tyrant "whom men call Love;" and protested, that he would gladly encounter any fate, to be delivered from the worse evils of his false and cruel ascendency.

But his lamentations were interrupted. The apothecary who sold the potion to the husband and wife was at the door below, requesting to speak with him. The servants at first had refused to carry the message; but the old man persisting, and saying it was a matter of life and death, entrance for him into his master's chamber was obtained.

"Noble sir," said the apothecary, "I have always held you in love and reverence. I have unfortunately reason to fear that somebody is desiring your death. This morning a handmaiden of the lady Tisbina applied to me for a secret poison; and just now it was told me, that the lady herself had been at this house. I am old, sir, and you are young; and I warn you against the violence and jealousies of womankind. Talk of their flames of love! Satan himself burn them, say I, for they are fit for nothing better. Do not be too much alarmed, however, this time: for in truth I gave the young woman nothing of the sort that she asked for, but only a draught so innocent, that if you have taken it, it will cost you but four or five hours' sleep. So, in God's name, give up the whole foolish sex; for you may depend on it, that in this city of ours there are ninety-nine wicked ones among them to one good."

You may guess how Prasildo's heart revived at these words. Truly might he be compared to flowers in sunshine after rain; he rejoiced through all his being, and displayed again a cheerful countenance. Hastily thanking the old man, he lost no time in repairing to the house of his neighbours, and telling them of their safety: and you may guess how the like joy was theirs.

But behold a wonder! Iroldo was so struck with the generosity of his neighbour's conduct throughout the whole of this extraordinary affair, that nothing would content his grateful though ever-grieving heart, but he must fairly give up Tisbina after all. Prasildo, to do him justice, resisted the proposition as stoutly as he could; but a man's powers are ill seconded by an unwilling heart; and though the contest was long and handsome, as is customary between generous natures, the husband adhered firmly to his intention. In short, he abruptly quitted the city, declaring that he would never again see it, and so left his wife to the lover. And I must add (concluded the fair lady who was telling the story to Rinaldo), that although Tisbina took his departure greatly to heart, and sometimes felt as if she should die at the thoughts of it, yet since he persisted in staying away, and there appeared no chance of his ever doing otherwise, she did, as in that case we should all do, we at least that are young and kind, and took the handsome Prasildo for second spouse.[1]

[1] "Tisbina," says Panizzi, in a note on this passage, "very wisely acted like Emilia (in Chaucer), who, when she saw she could not marry Arcita, because he was killed, thought of marrying Palemone, rather than 'be a mayden all hire lyf.' It is to be observed, that although she regretted very much what had hap-

pened, and even fainted away, she did not, however, stand on ceremonies, as the poet says in the next stanza, but yielded immediately, and married Prasildo. This, at first, I thought to be somewhat inconsistent; but on consideration I found I was wrong. Tisbina was wrong; because, having lost Iroldo, she did not know what Prasildo would do; but so soon as the latter offered to fill up the place, she nobly and magnanimously resigned herself to her fate."—*Ut sup.*, vol. iii. p. 336.

It might be thought inconsistent in Tisbina, notwithstanding Mr. Panizzi's pleasantry, to be so willing to take another husband, after having poisoned herself for the first; but she seems intended by the poet to exhibit a character of impulse in contradistinction to permanency of sentiment. She cannot help shewing pity for Prasildo; she cannot help poisoning herself for her husband; and she cannot help taking his friend, when she has lost him. Nor must it be forgotten, that the husband was the first to break the tie. We respect him more than we do her, because he was capable of greater self-denial; but if he himself preferred his friend to his love, we can hardly blame her (custom apart) for following the example.

Part the Second.

THE conclusion of this part of the history of Iroldo and Prasildo was scarcely out of the lady's mouth, when a tremendous voice was heard among the trees, and Rinaldo found himself confronting a giant of a frightful aspect, who with a griffin on each side of him was guarding a cavern that contained the enchanted horse which had belonged to the brother of Angelica. A combat ensued; and after winning the horse, and subsequently losing the company of the lady, the Paladin, in the course of his adventures, came upon a knight who lay lamenting in a green place by a fountain. The knight heeding nothing but his grief, did not perceive the new comer, who for some time remained looking at him in silence, till, desirous to know the cause of his sorrow, he dismounted from his horse, and courteously begged to be informed of it. The stranger in his turn looked a little while in silence at Rinaldo, and then told him he had resolved to die, in order to be rid of a life of misery. And yet, he added, it was not his own lot which grieved him, so much as that of a noble

friend who would die at the same time, and who had nobody to help him.

The knight, who was no other than Tisbina's husband Iroldo, then briefly related the events which the reader has heard, and proceeded to state how he had traversed the world ever since for two years, when it was his misfortune to arrive in the territories of the enchantress Falerina, whose custom it was to detain foreigners in prison, and daily give a couple of them (a lady and a cavalier) for food to a serpent which kept the entrance of her enchanted garden. To this serpent he himself was destined to be sacrificed, when Prasildo, the possessor of his wife Tisbina, hearing of his peril, set out instantly from Babylon, and rode night and day till he came to the abode of the enchantress, determined that nothing should hinder him from doing his utmost to save the life of a friend so generous. Save it he did, and that by a generosity no less devoted; for having attempted in vain to bribe the keeper of the prison, he succeeded in prevailing on the man to let him substitute himself for his friend; and he was that very day, perhaps that very moment, preparing for the dreadful death to which he would speedily be brought.

"I will not survive such a friend," concluded

Iroldo. "I know I shall contend with his warders to no purpose; but let the wretches come, if they will, by thousands; I shall fight them to the last gasp. One comfort in death, one joy I shall at all events experience. I shall be with Prasildo in the other world. And yet when I think what sort of death he must endure, even the release from my own miseries afflicts me, since it will not prevent him from undergoing that horror."

The Paladin shed tears to hear of a case so piteous and affectionate, and in a tone of encouragement offered his services towards the rescue of his friend. Iroldo looked at him in astonishment, but sighed and said, "Ah, sir, I thank you with all my heart, and you are doubtless a most noble cavalier, to be so fearless and good-hearted; but what right have I to bring you to destruction for no reason and to no purpose? There is not a man on earth but Orlando himself, or his cousin Rinaldo, who could possibly do us any good; and so I beg you to accept my thanks and depart in safety, and may God reward you."

"It is true," replied the Paladin, "I am not Orlando; and yet, for all that, I doubt not to be able to effect what I propose. Nor do I offer my assistance out of desire of glory, or of thanks, or return of any kind; except indeed, that if two

such unparalleled friends could admit me to be a third, I should hold myself a happy man. What! you have given up the woman of your heart, and deprived yourself of all joy and comfort; and your friend, on the other hand, has become a prisoner and devoted to death, for your sake; and can I be expected to leave two such friends in a jeopardy so monstrous, and not do all in my power to save them? I would rather die first myself, and on your own principle; I mean, in order to go with you into a better world."

While they were talking in this manner, a great ill-looking rabble, upwards of a thousand strong, made their appearance, carrying a banner, and bringing forth two prisoners to die. The wretches were armed after their disorderly fashion; and the prisoners each tied upon a horse. One of these hapless persons too surely was Prasildo; and the other turned out to be the damsel who had told Rinaldo the story of the friends. Having been deprived of the Paladin's assistance, her subsequent misadventures had brought her to this terrible pass. The moment Rinaldo beheld her, he leaped on his horse, and dashed among the villains. The sight of such an onset was enough for their cowardly hearts. The whole posse fled before him with precipitation, all except the leader, who

was a villain of gigantic strength; and him the Paladin, at one blow, clove through the middle. Iroldo could not speak for joy, as he hastened to release Prasildo. He was forced to give him tears instead of words. But when speech at length became possible, the two friends, fervently and with a religious awe, declared that their deliverer must have been divine and not human, so tremendous was the death-blow he had given the ruffian, and such winged and contemptuous slaughter he had dealt among the fugitives. By the time he returned from the pursuit, their astonishment had risen to such a pitch, that they fell on their knees and worshipped him for the Prophet of the Saracens, not believing such prowess possible to humanity, and devoutly thanking him for the mercy he had shewn them in coming thus visibly from heaven. Rinaldo for the moment was not a little disturbed at this sally of enthusiasm; but the singular good faith and simplicity of it restored him to himself; and with a smile between lovingness and humility he begged them to lay aside all such fancies, and know him for a man like themselves. He then disclosed himself for the Rinaldo of whom they had spoken, and made such an impression on them with his piety, and his attributing what had appeared a superhuman valour to

nothing but his belief in the Christian religion, that the transported friends became converts on the spot, and accompanied him thenceforth as the most faithful of his knights.

The story tells us nothing further of Tisbina, though there can be no doubt that Boiardo meant to give us the conclusion of her share in it; for the two knights take an active part in the adventures of their new friend Rinaldo. Perhaps, however, the discontinuance of the poem itself was lucky for the author, as far as this episode was concerned; for it is difficult to conceive in what manner he would have wound it up to the satisfaction of the reader.

SEEING AND BELIEVING.

Argument.

A lady has two suitors, a young and an old one, the latter of whom wins her against her inclinations by practising the artifice of Hippomanes in his race with Atalanta. Being very jealous, he locks her up in a tower; and the youth, who continued to be her lover, makes a subterraneous passage to it; and pretending to have married her sister, invites the old man to his house, and introduces his own wife to him as the bride. The husband, deceived, but still jealous, facilitates their departure out of the country, and returns to his tower to find himself deserted.

This story, like that of the *Saracen Friends*, is told by a damsel to a knight while riding in his company; with this difference, that she is the heroine of it herself. She is a damsel of a nature still lighter than the former; and the reader's sympathy with the trouble she brings on herself, and the way she gets out of it, will be modified accordingly. On the other hand, nobody can respect the foolish old man with his unwarrantable marriage; and the moral of Boiardo's story is still useful for these "enlightened times," though conveyed with an air of levity.

In addition to the classics, the poet has been to the Norman fablers for his story. The subterranean passage has been more than once repeated in romance; and the closing incident, the assistance given by the husband to his wife's elopement, has been imitated in the farce of *Lionel and Clarissa*.

SEEING AND BELIEVING.

My father (said the damsel) is King of the Distant Islands, where the treasure of the earth is collected. Never was greater wealth known, and I was heiress of it all.

But it is impossible to foresee what is most to be desired for us in this world. I was a king's daughter, I was rich, I was handsome, I was lively; and yet to all those advantages I owed my ill-fortune.

Among other suitors for my hand there came two on the same day, one of whom was a youth named Ordauro, handsome from head to foot; the other an old man of seventy, whose name was Folderico. Both were rich and of noble birth; but the greybeard was counted extremely wise, and of a foresight more than human. As I did not feel in want of his foresight, the youth was far more to my taste; and accordingly I listened to him with perfect good-will, and gave the wise man no sort of encouragement.

I was not at liberty, however, to determine the matter; my father had a voice in it; so, fearing what he would advise, I thought to secure a good result by cunning and management. It is an old observation, that the craft of a woman exceeds all other craft. Indeed, it is Solomon's own saying. But now-a-days people laugh at it; and I found to my cost that the laugh is just. I requested my father to proclaim, first, that nobody should have me in marriage who did not surpass me in swiftness (for I was a damsel of a mighty agility); and secondly, that he who did surpass me should be my husband. He consented, and I thought my happiness secure. You must know, I have run down a bird, and caught it with my own hand.

Well, both my suitors came to the race; the youth on a large war-horse, trapped with gold, which curvetted in a prodigious manner, and seemed impatient for a gallop; the old man on a mule, carrying a great bag at his side, and looking already tired out. They dismounted on the place chosen for the trial, which was a meadow. It was encircled by a world of spectators; and the greybeard and myself (for his age gave him the first chance) only waited for the sound of the trumpet to set off.

I held my competitor in such contempt, that I

let him get the start of me, on purpose to make him ridiculous; but I was not prepared for his pulling a golden apple out of his bag, and throwing it as far as he could in a direction different from that of the goal. The sight of a curiosity so tempting was too much for my prudence; and it rolled away so roundly, and to such a distance, that I lost more time in reaching it than I looked for. Before I overtook the old gentleman, he threw another apple, and this again led me a chase after it. In short, I blush to say, that, resolved as I was to be tempted no further, seeing that the end of our course was now at hand, and my marriage with an old man instead of a young man was out of the question, he seduced me to give chase to a third apple, and fairly reached the goal before me. I wept for rage and disgust, and meditated every species of unconjugal treatment of the old fox. What right had he to marry such a child as I was? I asked myself the question at the time; I asked it a thousand times afterwards; and I must confess, that the more I have tormented him, the more the retaliation delights me.

However, it was of no use at the moment. The old wretch bore me off to his domains with an ostentatious triumph; and then, his jealousy misgiving him, he shut me up in a castle on a

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rock, where he endeavoured from that day forth to keep me from the sight of living being. You may judge what sort of castle it was by its name—*Altamura* (lofty wall). It overlooked a desert on three sides, and the sea on the fourth; and a man might as well have flown as endeavoured to scale it. There was but one path up to the entrance, very steep and difficult; and when you were there, you must have pierced outwork after outwork, and picked the lock of gate after gate. So there sat I in this delicious retreat, hopeless, and bursting with rage. I called upon death day and night, as my only refuge. I had no comfort but in seeing my keeper mad with jealousy, even in that desolate spot. I think he was jealous of the very flies.

My handsome youth, Ordauro, however, had not forgotten me; no, nor even given me up. Luckily he was not only very clever, but rich besides; without which, to be sure, his brains would not have availed him a pin. What does he do, therefore, but take a house in the neighbourhood on the sea-shore; and while my tormentor, in alarm and horror, watches every movement, and thinks him coming if he sees a cloud or a bird, Ordauro sets people secretly to work night and day, and makes a subterraneous passage up to the very tower!

Guess what I felt when I saw him enter! Assuredly I did not shew him the face which I shewed Folderico. I die with joy this moment to think of my delight. As soon as we could discourse of any thing but our meeting, Ordauro concerted measures for my escape; and the greatest difficulty being surmounted by the subterraneous passage, they at last succeeded. But our enemy gave us a frightful degree of trouble.

There was no end of the old man's pryings, peepings, and precautions. He left me as little as possible by myself; and he had all the coast thereabouts at his command, together with the few boats that ever touched it.

Ordauro, however, did a thing at once the most bold and the most ingenious. He gave out that he was married; and inviting my husband to dinner, who had heard the news with transport, presented me, to his astonished eyes, for the bride. The old man looked as if he would have died for rage and misery.

"Horrible villain!" cried he, "what is this?"

Ordauro professed astonishment in his turn.

"What!" asked he; "do you not know that the princess, your lady's sister, is wonderfully like her, and that she has done me the honour of becoming my wife? I invited you in order to do

honour to yourself, and so bring the good families together."

"Detestable falsehood!" cried Folderico. "Do you think I'm blind, or a born idiot? But I'll see to this business directly; and terrible shall be my revenge."

So saying, he flung out, and hastened, as fast as age would let him, to the room in the tower, where he expected to find me not. But there he did find me:—there was I, sitting as if nothing had happened, with my hand on my cheek, and full of my old melancholy.

"God preserve me!" exclaimed he; "this is astonishing indeed! Never could I have dreamt that one sister could be so like another! But is it so, or is it not? I have terrible suspicions. It is impossible to believe it. Tell me truly," he continued; "answer me on the faith of a daring woman, and you shall get no hurt by it. Has any one opened the portals for you to-day? Who was it? How did you get out? Tell me the truth, and you shall not suffer for it; but deceive me, and there is no punishment that you may not look for."

It is needless to say how I vowed and protested that I had never stirred; that it was quite impossible; that I could not have done it if I would,

&c. I took all the saints to witness to my veracity, and swore I had never seen the outside of his tremendous castle.

The monster had nothing to say to this; but I saw what he meant to do—I saw that he would return instantly to the house of Ordauro, and ascertain if the bride was there. Accordingly, the moment he turned the key on me, I flew down the subterraneous passage, tossed on my new clothes like lightning, and sat in my lover's house as before, waiting the arrival of the panting old gentleman.

"Well," exclaimed he, as soon as he set eyes upon me, "never in all my life—no—I must allow it to be impossible—never can my wife at home be the lady sitting here."

From that day forth the old man, whenever he saw me in Ordauro's house, treated me as if I were indeed his sister-in-law, though he never had the heart to bring the two wives together, for fear of old recollections. Nevertheless, this state of things was still very perilous; and my new husband and myself lost no time in considering how we should put an end to it by leaving the country. Ordauro resorted, as before, to a bold expedient. He told Folderico that the air of the sea-coast disagreed with him; and the old man, whose delight

at getting rid of his neighbour helped to blind him to the deceit, not only expedited the movement, but offered to see him part of the way on his journey!

The offer was accepted. Six miles he rode forth with us, the stupid old man; and then, taking his leave, to return home, we pushed our horses like lightning, and so left him to tear his hair and his old beard with cries and curses, as soon as he opened the door of his tower.

ARIOSTO:

Critical Notice of his Life and Genius.

Critical Notice

OF

ARIOSTO'S LIFE AND GENIUS.[1]

THE congenial spirits of Pulci and Boiardo may be said to have attained to their height in the person of Ariosto, upon the principle of a transmigration of souls, or after the fashion of that

[1] The materials for this notice have been chiefly collected from the poet's own writings (rich in autobiographical intimation) and from his latest editor Panizzi. I was unable to see this writer's principal authority, Baruffaldi, till I corrected the proofs and the press was waiting; otherwise I might have added two or three more particulars, not, however, of any great consequence. Panizzi is, as usual, copious and to the purpose; and has, for the first time I believe, critically proved the regularity and connectedness of Ariosto's plots, as well as the hollowness of the pretensions of the house of Este to be considered patrons of literature. It is only a pity that his *Life of Ariosto* is not better arranged. I have, of course, drawn my own conclusions respecting particulars, and sometimes have thought I had reason to differ with those who have preceded me; but not, I hope, with a presumption unbecoming a foreigner.

hero in romance, who was heir to the bodily strengths of all whom he conquered.

Lodovico Giovanni Ariosto was born on the 8th of September, 1474, in the fortress at Reggio, in Lombardy, and was the son of Niccolò Ariosto, captain of that citadel (as Boiardo had been), and Daria Maleguzzi, whose family still exists. The race was transplanted from Bologna in the century previous, when Obizzo the Third of Este, Marquess of Ferrara, married a lady belonging to it, whose Christian name was Lippa. Niccolò Ariosto, besides holding the same office as Boiardo had done, at Modena as well as at Reggio, was master of the household to his two successive patrons, the Dukes Borso and Ercole. He was also employed, like him, in diplomacy; and was made a count by the Emperor Frederick the Third, though not, it seems, with remainder to his heirs.

Lodovico was the eldest of ten children, five sons and five daughters. During his boyhood, theatrical entertainments were in great vogue at court, as we have seen in the life of Boiardo; and at the age of twelve, a year after the decease of that poet (who must have been well known to him, and probably encouraged his attempts), his successor is understood to have dramatised, after

his infant fashion, the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, and to have got his brothers and sisters to perform it. Panizzi doubts the possibility of these precocious private theatricals; but considering what is called "writing" on the part of children, and that only one other performer was required in the piece, or at best a third for the lion (which some little brother might have "roared like any sucking-dove"), I cannot see good reason for disbelieving the story. Pope was not twelve years old when he turned the siege of Troy into a play, and got his school-fellows to perform it, the part of Ajax being given to the gardener. Man is a theatrical animal (ζῶον μιμητικόν), and the instinct is developed at a very early period, as almost every family can witness that has taken its children to the "playhouse."

At fifteen the young poet, like so many others of his class, was consigned to the study of the law, and took a great dislike to it. The extreme mobility of his nature, and the wish to please his father, appear to have made him enter on it willingly enough in the first instance;[1] but as soon

[1] See in his Latin poems the lines beginning,

"Hæc me verbosas suasit perdiscere leges."

De Diversis Amoribus.

as he betrayed symptoms of disgust, Niccolò, whose affairs were in a bad way, drove him back to it with a vehemence which must have made bad worse.[1] At the expiration of five years he was allowed to give it up.

There is reason to believe that Ariosto was "theatricalising" during no little portion of this time; for, in his nineteenth year, he is understood to have been taken by Duke Ercole to Pavia and to Milan, either as a writer or performer of comedies, probably both, since the courtiers and ducal family themselves occasionally appeared on the stage; and one of the poet's brothers mentions his having frequently seen him dressed in character.[2]

On being delivered from the study of the law, the young poet appears to have led a cheerful and unrestrained life for the next four or five years.

[1] "Mio padre mi cacciò con spiedi e lancie," &c.
Satira vi.

There is some appearance of contradiction in this passage and the one referred to in the preceding note; but I think the conclusion in the text the probable one, and that he was not compelled to study the law in the first instance. He speaks more than once of his father's memory with great tenderness, particularly in the lines on his death, entitled *De Nicolao Areosto.*

[2] His brother Gabriel expressly mentions it in his prologue to the *Scholastica.*

He wrote, or began to write, the comedy of the *Cassaria;* probably meditated some poem in the style of Boiardo, then in the height of his fame; and he cultivated the Latin language, and intended to learn Greek, but delayed, and unfortunately missed it in consequence of losing his tutor. Some of his happiest days were passed at a villa, still possessed by the Maleguzzi family, called La Mauriziana, two miles from Reggio. Twenty-five years afterwards he called to mind, with sighs, the pleasant spots there which used to invite him to write verses; the garden, the little river, the mill, the trees by the water-side, and all the other shady places in which he enjoyed himself during that sweet season of his life "betwixt April and May."[1] To complete his happiness, he had a friend and cousin, Pandolfo Ariosto, who loved every thing that he loved, and for whom he augured a brilliant reputation.

But a dismal cloud was approaching. In his twenty-first year he lost his father, and found a large family left on his hands in narrow circumstances. The charge was at first so heavy, especially when aggravated by the death of Pan-

1 "Già mi fur dolci inviti," &c.
Satira v.

dolfo, that he tells us he wished to die. He took to it manfully, however, in spite of these fits of gloom; and he lived to see his admirable efforts rewarded; his brothers enabled to seek their fortunes, and his sisters properly taken care of. Two of them, it seems, had become nuns. A third married; and a fourth remained long in his house. It is not known what became of the fifth.

In these family-matters the anxious son and brother was occupied for three or four years, not, however, without recreating himself with his verses, Latin and Italian, and recording his admiration of a number of goddesses of his youth. He mentions, in particular, one of the name of Lydia, who kept him often from "his dear mother and household," and who is probably represented by the princess of the same name in the *Orlando*, punished in the smoke of Tartarus for being a jilt and coquette.[1] His friend Bembo, afterwards the celebrated cardinal, recommended him to be blind to such little immaterial points as ladies' infidelities. But he is shocked at the advice. He was far more of Othello's opinion than Congreve's in such matters; and declared, that he would not

[1] See, in the present volume, the beginning of *Astolfo's Journey to the Moon.*

have shared his mistress's good-will with Jupiter himself.[1]

Towards the year 1504, the poet entered the service of the unworthy prince, Cardinal Ippolito of Este, brother of the new Duke of Ferrara, Alfonso the First. His eminence, who had been made a prince of the church at thirteen years of age by the infamous Alexander the Sixth (Borgia), was at this period little more than one-and-twenty; but he took an active part in the duke's affairs, both civil and military, and is said to have made himself conspicuous in his father's lifetime for his vices and brutality. He is charged with having ordered a papal messenger to be severely beaten for bringing him some unpleasant despatches: which so exasperated his unfortunate parent, that he was exiled to Mantua; and the marquess of that city, his brother-in-law, was obliged to come to Ferrara to obtain his pardon. But this was a trifle compared with what he is accused of having done to one of his brothers. A female of their acquaintance, in answer to a

[1] "Me potius fugiat, nullis mollita querelis,
Dum simulet reliquos Lydia dura procos.
Parte carere omni malo, quam admittere quemquam
In partem. Cupiat Juppiter ipse, negem."
Ad Petrum Bembum.

speech made her by the reverend gallant, had been so unlucky as to say that she preferred his brother Giulio's eyes to his eminence's whole body: upon which the monstrous villain hired two ruffians to put out his brother's eyes; some say, was present at the attempt. Attempt only it fortunately turned out to be, at least in part; the opinion being, that the sight of one of the eyes was preserved.[1]

Party-spirit has so much to do with stories of princes, and princes are so little in a condition to notice them, that, on the principle of not condemning a man till he has been heard in his defence, an honest biographer would be loath to credit these horrors of Cardinal Ippolito, did not the violent nature of the times, and the general character of the man, even with his defenders, incline him to do so. His being a soldier rather than a churchman was a fault of the age, perhaps a credit

[1] Panizzi, on the authority of Guicciardini and others. Giulio and another brother (Ferrante) afterwards conspired against Alfonso and Ippolito, and, on the failure of their enterprise, were sentenced to be imprisoned for life. Ferrante died in confinement at the expiration of thirty-four years; Giulio, at the end of fifty-three, was pardoned. He came out of prison on horseback, dressed according to the fashion of the time when he was arrested, and "greatly excited the curiosity of the people."—*Idem*, vol. i. p xii.

to the man, for he appears to have had abilities for war, and it was no crime of his if he was put into the church when a boy. But his conduct to Ariosto shewed him coarse and selfish; and those who say all they can for him admit that he was proud and revengeful, and that nobody regretted him when he died. He is said to have had a taste for mathematics, as his brother had for mechanics. The truth seems to be, that he and the duke, who lived in troubled times, and had to exert all their strength to hinder Ferrara from becoming a prey to the court of Rome, were clever, harsh men, of no grace or elevation of character, and with no taste but for war; and if it had not been for their connexion with Ariosto, nobody would have heard of them, except while perusing the annals of the time. Ippolito might have been, and probably was, the ruffian which the anecdote of his brother Giulio represents him; but the world would have heard little of the villany, had he not treated a poet with contempt.

The admirers of our author may wonder how he could become the servant of such a man, much more how he could praise him as he did in the great work which he was soon to begin writing. But Ariosto was the son of a man who had passed

his life in the service of the family; he had probably been taught a loyal blindness to its defects; gratuitous panegyrics of princes had been the fashion of men of letters since the time of Augustus; and the poet wanted help for his relatives, and was of a nature to take the least show of favour for a virtue, till he had learnt, as he unfortunately did, to be disappointed in the substance. It is not known what his appointment was under the cardinal. Probably he was a kind of gentleman of all work; an officer in his guards, a companion to amuse, and a confidential agent for the transaction of business. The employment in which he is chiefly seen is that of an envoy, but he is said also to have been in the field of battle; and he intimates in his *Satires*, that household attentions were expected of him which he was not quick to offer, such as pulling off his eminence's boots, and putting on his spurs.[1] It is certain that he was employed in very delicate negotiations, sometimes to the risk of his life from the perils of roads and torrents. Ippolito, who was a man of no delicacy, probably made use of

[1] "Che debbo fare io qui?
Agli usatti, agli sprou (perch' io son grande)
Non mi posso adattar, per porne o trarne."
Satira ii.

him on every occasion that required address, the smallest as well as greatest,—an interview with a pope one day, and a despatch to a dog-fancier the next.

His great poem, however, proceeded. It was probably begun before he entered the cardinal's service; certainly was in progress during the early part of his engagement. This appears from a letter written to Ippolito by his sister the Marchioness of Mantua, to whom he had sent Ariosto at the beginning of the year 1509 to congratulate her on the birth of a child. She gives her brother special thanks for sending his message to her by "Messer Ludovico Ariosto," who had made her, she says, pass two delightful days, with giving her an account of the poem he was writing.[1] Isabella was the name of this princess; and the

[1] "Per la lettera de la S. V. Reverendiss. et a bocha da Ms. Ludovico Ariosto ho inteso quanta leticia ha conceputa del felice parto mio: il che mi è stato summamente grato, cussi lo ringrazio de la visitazione, et particolarmente di havermi mandato il dicto Ms. Ludovico, per che ultra che mi sia stato acetto, representando la persona de la S. V. Reverendiss. lui anche per conto suo mi ha addutta gran satisfazione, havendomi cum la narratione de l' opera che compone facto passar questi due giorni non solum senza fastidio, ma cum piacer grandissimo."—Tiraboschi, *Storia della Poesia Italiana*, Matthias' edition, vol. iii. p. 197.

grateful poet did not forget to embalm it in his verse.[1]

Ariosto's latest biographer, Panizzi, thinks he never served under any other leader than the cardinal; but I cannot help being of opinion with a former one, whom he quotes, that he once took arms under a captain of the name of Pio, probably a kinsman of his friend Alberto Pio, to whom he addresses a Latin poem. It was probably on occasion of some early disgust with the cardinal; but I am at a loss to discover at what period of time. Perhaps, indeed, he had the cardinal's permission, both to quit his service, and return to it. Possibly he was not to quit it at all, except according to events; but merely had leave given him to join a party in arms, who were furthering Ippolito's own objects. Italy was full of captains in arms and conflicting interests. The poet might even, at some period of his life, have headed a troop under another cardinal, his friend Giovanni de' Medici, afterwards Leo the Tenth. He had certainly been with him in various parts of Italy; and might have taken part in some of his bloodless, if not his most military, equitations.

Be this as it may, it is understood that Ariosto

[1] *Orlando Furioso*, canto xxix. st. 29.

was present at the repulse given to the Venetians by Ippolito, when they came up the river Po against Ferrara towards the close of the year 1509; though he was away from the scene of action at his subsequent capture of their flotilla, the poet having been despatched between the two events to Pope Julius the Second on the delicate business of at once appeasing his anger with the duke for resisting his allies, and requesting his help to a feudatary of the church. Julius was in one of his towering passions at first, but gave way before the address of the envoy, and did what he desired. But Ariosto's success in this mission was nearly being the death of him in another; for Alfonso having accompanied the French the year following in their attack on Vicenza, where they committed cruelties of the same horrible kind as have shocked Europe within a few months past,[1] the poet's tongue, it was thought, might be equally efficacious a second time; but Julius, worn out of patience with his too independent vassal, who maintained an alliance with the French when the pope had ceased to desire it, was to be appeased no longer. He excommunicated Alfonso, and threatened to pitch his envoy into the Tiber; so that

[1] See the horrible account of the suffocated Vicentine Grottoes, in Sismondi, *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, &c. vol. iv. p. 48.

the poet was fain to run for it, as the duke himself was afterwards, when he visited Rome to be absolved. Would Julius have thus treated Ariosto, could he have foreseen his renown? Probably he would. The greater the opposition to the will, the greater the will itself. To chuck an accomplished envoy into the river would have been much; but to chuck the immortal poet there, laurels and all, in the teeth of the amazement of posterity, would have been a temptation irresistible.

It was on this occasion that Ariosto, probably from inability to choose his times or modes of returning home, contracted a cough, which is understood to have shortened his existence; so that Julius may have killed him after all. But the pope had a worse enemy in his own bosom—his violence—which killed himself in a much shorter period. He died in little more than two years afterwards; and the poet's prospects were all now of a very different sort—at least he thought so; for in March 1513, his friend Giovanni de' Medici succeeded to the papacy, under the title of Leo the Tenth.

Ariosto hastened to Rome, among a shoal of visitants, to congratulate the new pope, perhaps not without a commission from Alfonso to see what he could do for his native country, on which

the rival Medici family never ceased to have designs. The poet was full of hope, for he had known Leo under various fortunes; had been styled by him not only a friend, but a brother; and promised all sorts of participations of his prosperity. Not one of them came. The visitor was cordially received. Leo stooped from his throne, squeezed his hand, and kissed him on both his cheeks; but "at night," says Ariosto, "I went all the way to the Sheep to get my supper, wet through." All that Leo gave him was a "bull," probably the one securing to him the profits of his *Orlando;* and the poet's friend Bibbiena—wit, cardinal, and kinsman of Berni—facilitated the bull, but the receiver discharged the fees. He did not get one penny by promise, pope, or friend.[1] He complains a little, but all in good humour; and good-naturedly asks what he was to expect,

[1] "Piegossi a me dalla beata sede;
La mano e poi le gote ambe mi prese,
E il santo bacio in amendue mi diede.

Di mezza quella bolla anco cortese
Mi fu, della quale ora il mio Bibbiena
Espedito m' ha il resto alle mie spese.

Indi col seno e con la falda piena
Di speme, ma di pioggia molle e brutto,
La notte andai sin al Montone a cena." *Sat.* iv.

when so many hungry kinsmen and partisans were to be served first. Well and wisely asked too, and with a superiority to his fortunes which Leo and Bibbiena might have envied.

It is thought probable, however, that if the poet had been less a friend to the house of Este, Leo would have kept his word with him, for their intimacy had undoubtedly been of the most cordial description. But it is supposed that Leo was afraid he should have a Ferrarese envoy constantly about him, had he detained Ariosto in Rome. The poet, however, it is admitted, was not a good hunter of preferment. He could not play the assenter, and bow and importune: and sovereigns, however friendly they may have been before their elevation, go the way of most princely flesh when they have attained it. They like to take out a man's gratitude beforehand, perhaps because they feel little security in it afterwards.

The elevation to the papacy of the cheerful and indulgent son of Lorenzo de' Medici, after the troublous reign of Julius, was hailed with delight by all Christendom, and nowhere more so than in the pope's native place, Florence. Ariosto went there to see the spectacles; and there, in the midst of them, he found himself robbed of his heart by the lady whom he afterwards married. Her name

was Alessandra Benucci. She was the widow of one of the Strozzi family, whom he had known in Ferrara, and he had long admired her. The poet, who, like Petrarch and Boccaccio, has recorded the day on which he fell in love, which was that of St. John the Baptist (the showy saint-days of the south offer special temptations to that effect), dwells with minute fondness on the particulars of the lady's appearance. Her dress was black silk, embroidered with two grape-bearing vines intertwisted; and "between her serene forehead and the path that went dividing in two her rich and golden tresses," was a sprig of laurel in bud. Her observer, probably her welcome if not yet accepted lover, beheld something very significant in this attire; and a mysterious poem, in which he records a device of a black pen feathered with gold, which he wore embroidered on a gown of his own, has been supposed to allude to it. As every body is tempted to make his guess on such occasions, I take the pen to have been the black-haired poet himself, and the golden feather the tresses of the lady. Beautiful as he describes her, with a face full of sweetness, and manners noble and engaging, he speaks most of the charms of her golden locks. The black gown could hardly have implied her widowhood: the allusion would not

have been delicate. The vine belongs to dramatic poets, among whom the lover was at that time to be classed, the *Orlando* not having appeared. Its duplification intimated another self; and the crowning laurel was the success that awaited the heroic poet and the conqueror of the lady's heart.[1]

The marriage was never acknowledged. The husband was in the receipt of profits arising from church-offices, which put him into the condition of the fellow of a college with us, who cannot marry so long as he retains his fellowship: but it is proved to have taken place, though the date of it is uncertain. Ariosto, in a satire written three or four years after his falling in love, says he never intends either to marry or to take orders; because, if he takes orders, he cannot marry; and if he marries, he cannot take orders—that is to say, must give up his semi-priestly emoluments. This is one of the falsehoods which the Roman Catholic religion thinks itself warranted in tempting honest men to fall into; thus perplexing their faith as to the very roots of all faith, and tending to maintain a sensual hypocrisy, which can do no good to the strongest minds, and must terribly injure the weak.

[1] See *canzone* the first, "Non so s' io potrò," &c.; and the *capitolo* beginning "Della mia negra penna in fregio d' oro."

Ariosto's love for this lady I take to have been one of the causes of dissatisfaction between him and the cardinal. "Fortunately for the poet," as Panizzi observes, Ippolito was not always in Ferrara. He travelled in Italy, and he had an archbishopric in Hungary, the tenure of which compelled occasional residence. His company was not desired in Rome, so that he was seldom there. Ariosto, however, was an amusing companion; and the cardinal seems not to have liked to go anywhere without him. In the year 1515 he was attended by the poet part of the way on a journey to Rome and Urbino; but Ariosto fell ill, and had leave to return. He confesses that his illness was owing to an anxiety of love; and he even makes an appeal to the cardinal's experience of such feelings; so that it might seem he was not afraid of Ippolito's displeasure in that direction. But the weakness which selfish people excuse in themselves becomes a "very different thing" (as they phrase it) in another. The appeal to the cardinal's experience might only have exasperated him, in its assumption of the identity of the case. However, the poet was, at all events, left this time to the indulgence of his love and his poetry; and in the course of the ensuing year, a copy of the first edition of the *Orlando Furioso*, in forty cantos,

was put into the hands of the illustrious person to whom it was dedicated.

The words in which the cardinal was pleased to express himself on this occasion have become memorable. "Where the devil, Master Lodovick," said the reverend personage, "have you picked up such a parcel of trumpery?" The original term is much stronger, aggravating the insult with indecency. There is no equivalent for it in English; and I shall not repeat it in Italian. "It is as low and indecent," says Panizzi, "as any in the language." Suffice it to say that, although the age was not scrupulous in such matters, it was one of the last words befitting the lips of the reverend Catholic; and that, when Ippolito of Este (as Ginguéné observes) made that speech to the great poet, "he uttered—prince, cardinal, and mathematician as he was—an impertinence."[1]

Was the cardinal put out of temper by a device which appeared in this book? On the leaf succeeding the title-page was the privilege for its publication, granted by Leo in terms of the most flattering personal recognition.[2] So far so good;

[1] *Histoire Littéraire*, &c. vol. iv. p. 335.

[2] "Singularis tua et pervetus erga nos familiamque nostrum observantia, egregiaque bonarum artium et litterarum doctrina, atque in studiis mitioribus, præsertimque poetices elegans et præ-

unless the unpoetical Este patron was not pleased to see such interest taken in the book by the tasteful Medici patron. But on the back of this leaf was a device of a hive, with the bees burnt out of it for their honey, and the motto, "Evil for good" (*Pro bono malum*). Most biographers are of opinion that this device was aimed at the cardinal's ill return for all the sweet words lavished on him and his house. If so, and supposing Ariosto to have presented the dedication-copy in person, it would have been curious to see the faces of the two men while his Eminence was looking at it. Some will think that the goodnatured poet could hardly have taken such an occasion of displaying

clarum ingenium, jure prope suo a nobis exposcere videntur, ut quæ tibi usui futuræ sint, justa præsertim et honesta petenti, ea tibi liberaliter et gratiose concedamus. Quamobrem," &c. "On the same page," says Panizzi, "are mentioned the privileges granted by the king of France, by the republic of Venice, and other potentates;" so that authors, in those days, appear to have been thought worthy of profiting by their labours, wherever they contributed to the enjoyment of mankind.

Leo's privilege is the one that so long underwent the singular obloquy of being a bull of excommunication against all who objected to the poem! a misconception on the part of some ignorant man, or misrepresentation by some malignant one, which affords a remarkable warning against taking things on trust from one writer after another. Even Bayle (see the article "Leo X." in his Dictionary) suffered his inclinations to blind his vigilance.

his resentment. But the device did not express at whom it was aimed: the cardinal need not have applied it to himself if he did not choose, especially as the book was full of his praises; and goodnatured people will not always miss an opportunity of covertly inflicting a sting. The device, at all events, shewed that the honey-maker had got worse than nothing by his honey; and the house of Este could not say they had done any thing to contradict it.

I think it probable that neither the poet's device nor the cardinal's speech were forgotten, when, in the course of the next year, the parties came to a rupture in consequence of the servant's refusing to attend his master into Hungary. Ariosto excused himself on account of the state of his health and of his family. He said that a cold climate did not agree with him; that his chest was affected, and could not bear even the stoves of Hungary; and that he could not, in common decency and humanity, leave his mother in her old age, especially as all the rest of the family were away but his youngest sister, whose interests he had also to take care of. But Ippolito was not to be appeased. The public have seen, in a late female biography, a deplorable instance of the unfeelingness with which even a princess with a reputation for religion

could treat the declining health and unwilling retirement of a poor slave in her service, fifty times her superior in every thing but servility. Greater delicacy was not to be expected of the military priest. The nobler the servant, the greater the desire to trample upon him and keep him at a disadvantage. It is a grudge which rank owes to genius, and which it can only wave when its possessor is himself "one of God Almighty's gentlemen." I do not mean in point of genius, which is by no means the highest thing in the world, whatever its owners may think of it; but in point of the highest of all things, which is nobleness of heart. I confess I think Ariosto was wrong in expecting what he did of a man he must have known so well, and in complaining so much of courts, however good-humouredly. A prince occupies the station he does, to avert the perils of disputed successions, and not to be what his birth cannot make him—if nature has not supplied the materials. Besides, the cardinal, in his quality of a mechanical-minded man with no taste, might with reason have complained of his servant's attending to poetry when it was "not in his bond;" when it diverted him from the only attentions which his employer understood or desired. Ippolito candidly confessed, as Ariosto himself tells us, that he not only did

not care for poetry, but never gave his attendant one stiver in patronage of it, or for any thing whatsoever but going his journeys and doing as he was bidden.[1] On the other hand, the cardinal's payments were sorry ones; and the poet might with justice have thought, that he was not bound to consider them an equivalent for the time he was expected to give up. The only thing to have been desired in this case was, that he should have said so; and, in truth, at the close of the explanation which he gave on the subject to his friends at court, he did—boldly desiring them, as became him, to tell the cardinal, that if his eminence expected him to be a "serf" for what he received, he should decline the bargain; and that he preferred the humblest freedom and his studies to a slavery so preposterous.[2]

[1] "Apollo, tua mercè, tua mercè, santo
Collegio delle Muse, io non mi trovo
Tanto per voi, ch' io possa farmi un manto:
E se 'l signor m' ha dato onde far novo
Ogni anno mi potrei più d' un mantello,
Che mi abbia per voi dato, non approvo.
Egli l' ha detto." *Satira* ii.

[2] "Se avermi dato onde ogni quattro mesi
Ho venticinque scudi, nè sì fermi,
Che molte volte non mi sien contesi,

The truth is, the poet should have attached himself wholly to the Medici. Had he not adhered to the duller house, he might have led as happy a life with the pope as Pulci did with the pope's father; perhaps have been made a cardinal, like his friends Bembo and Sadolet. But then we might have lost the *Orlando*.

The only sinecure which the poet is now supposed to have retained, was a grant of twenty-five crowns every four months on the episcopal chancery of Milan: so, to help out his petty income, he proceeded to enter into the service of Alfonso, which shews that both the brothers were not angry with him. He tells us, that he would gladly have had no new master, could he have helped it; but that, if he must needs serve, he would rather serve the master of every body else than a subordinate one. At this juncture he had a brief prospect of being as free as he wished; for an uncle died leaving a large landed property still known as the Ariosto

> Mi debbe incatenar, schiavo tenermi,
> Obbligarmi ch' io sudi e tremi senza
> Rispetto alcun, ch' io muoja o ch' io m' infermi,
>
> Non gli lasciate aver questa credenza:
> Ditegli, che più tosto ch' esser servo,
> Torrò la povertade in pazienza."
>
> *Satira* ii.

lands (*Le Arioste*); but a convent demanded it on the part of one of their brotherhood, who was a natural son of this gentleman; and a more formidable and ultimately successful claim was advanced in a court of law by the Chamber of the Duchy of Ferrara, the first judge in the cause being the duke's own steward and a personal enemy of the poet's. Ariosto, therefore, while the suit was going on, was obliged to content himself with his fees from Milan and a monthly allowance which he received from the duke of "about thirty-eight shillings," together with provisions for three servants and two horses. He entered the duke's service in the spring of 1518, and remained in it for the rest of his life. But it was not so burdensome as that of the cardinal; and the consequence of the poet's greater leisure was a second edition of the *Furioso*, in the year 1521, with additions and corrections; still, however, in forty cantos only. It appears, by a deed of agreement,[1] that the work was printed at the author's expense; that he was to sell the bookseller one hundred copies for sixty livres (about 5*l.* 12*s.*) on condition of the book's not being sold at the rate of more than sixteen sous (1*s.* 8*d.*); that the author was

[1] Panizzi, vol. i. p. 29. The agreement itself is in Baruffaldi.

not to give, sell, or allow to be sold, any copy of the book at Ferrara, except by the bookseller; that the bookseller, after disposing of the hundred copies, was to have as many more as he chose on the same terms; and that, on his failing to require a further supply, Ariosto was to be at liberty to sell his volumes to whom he pleased. "With such profits," observes Panizzi, "it was not likely that the poet would soon become independent;" and it may be added, that he certainly got nothing by the first edition, whatever he may have done by the second. He expressly tells us, in the satire which he wrote on declining to go abroad with Ippolito, that all his poetry had not procured him money enough to purchase a cloak.[1] Twenty years afterwards, when he was dead, the poem was in such request, that, between 1542 and 1551, Panizzi calculates there must have been a sale of it in Europe to the amount of a hundred thousand copies.[2]

The second edition of the *Furioso* did not extricate the author from very serious difficulties; for the next year he was compelled to apply to

[1] See the lines before quoted, beginning "Apollo, tua mercè."

[2] *Bibliographical Notices of Editions of Ariosto*, prefixed to his first vol. p. 51.

Alfonso, either to relieve him from his necessities, or permit him to look for some employment more profitable than the ducal service. The answer of this prince, who was now rich, but had always been penurious, and who never laid out a farthing, if he could help it, except in defence of his capital, was an appointment of Ariosto to the government of a district in a state of anarchy, called Garfagnana, which had nominally returned to his rule in consequence of the death of Leo, who had wrested it from him. It was a wild spot in the Apennines, on the borders of the Ferrarese and papal territories. Ariosto was there three years, and is said to have reduced it to order; but, according to his own account, he had very doubtful work of it. The place was overrun with banditti, including the troops commissioned to suppress them. It required a severer governor than he was inclined to be; and Alfonso did not attend to his requisitions for supplies. The candid and goodnatured poet intimates that the duke might have given him the appointment rather for the governor's sake than the people's; and the cold, the loneliness and barrenness of the place, and, above all, his absence from the object of his affections, oppressed him. He did not write a verse for twelve months: he

says he felt like a bird moulting.[1] The best thing got out of it was an anecdote for posterity. The poet was riding out one day with a few attendants —some say walking out in a fit of absence of mind —when he found himself in the midst of a band of outlaws, who, in a suspicious manner, barely suffered him to pass. A reader of Mrs. Radcliffe might suppose them a band of *condottieri*, under the command of some profligate desperado; and such perhaps they were. The governor had scarcely gone by, when the leader of the band, discovering who he was, came riding back with much earnestness, and making his obeisance to the poet, said, that he never should have allowed him to pass in that manner had he known him to be the Signor Ludovico Ariosto, author of the *Orlando Furioso;* that his own name was Filippo Pacchione (a celebrated personage of his order); and that his men and himself, so far from doing the signor displea-

[1] "La novità del loco è stata tanta,
C' ho fatto come augel che muta gabbia,
Che molti giorni resta che non canta."

For the rest of the above particulars see the fifth satire, beginning "Il vigesimo giorno di Febbraio." I quote the exordium, because these compositions are differently numbered in different editions. The one I generally use is that of Molini—*Poesie Varie di Lodovico Ariosto, con Annotazioni.* Firenze, 12mo, 1824.

sure, would have the honour of conducting him back to his castle. "And so they did," says Baretti, "entertaining him all along the way with the various excellences they had discerned in his poem, and bestowing upon it the most rapturous praises."[1]

On his return from Garfagnana, Ariosto is understood to have made several journeys in Italy, either with or without the duke his master; some of them to Mantua, where it has been said that he was crowned with laurel by the Emperor Charles the Fifth. But the truth seems to be, that he only received a laureate diploma: it does not appear that Charles made him any other gift. His

[1] *Italian Library*, p. 52. I quote Baretti, because he speaks with a corresponding enthusiasm. He calls the incident "a very rare proof of the irresistible powers of poetry, and a noble comment on the fables of Orpheus and Amphion," &c. The words "noble comment" might lead us to fancy that Johnson had made some such remark to him while relating the story in Bolt Court. Nor is the former part of the sentence unlike him: "A very rare proof, *sir*, of the irresistible powers of poetry, and a noble comment," &c. Johnson, notwithstanding his classical predilections, was likely to take much interest in Ariosto on account of his universality and the heartiness of his passions. He had a secret regard for "wildness" of all sorts, provided it came within any pale of the sympathetic. He was also fond of romances of chivalry. On one occasion he selected the history of Felixmarte of Hyrcania as his course of reading during a visit.

majesty, and the whole house of Este, and the pope, and all the other Italian princes, left that to be done by the imperial general, the celebrated Alfonso Davallos, Marquess of Vasto, to whom he was sent on some mission by the Duke of Ferrara, and who settled on him an annuity of a hundred golden ducats; "the only reward," says Panizzi, "which we find to have been conferred on Ariosto expressly as a poet."[1] Davallos was one of the conquerors of Francis the First, young and handsome, and himself a writer of verses. The grateful poet accordingly availed himself of his benefactor's accomplishments to make him, in turn, a present of every virtue under the sun. Cæsar was not so liberal, Nestor so wise, Achilles so potent, Nireus so beautiful, nor even Ladas, Alexander's messenger, so swift.[2] Ariosto was now verging towards the grave; and he probably saw in the hundred ducats a golden sunset of his cares.

Meantime, however, the poet had built a house,

[1] The deed of gift sets forth the interest which it becomes princes and commanders to take in men of letters, particularly poets, as heralds of their fame, and consequently the special fitness of the illustrious and superexcellent poet Lodovico Ariosto for receiving from Alfonso Davallos, Marquess of Vasto, the irrevocable sum of, &c. &c. Panizzi has copied the substance of it from Baruffaldi, vol. i. p. 67.

[2] *Orlando Furioso*, canto xxxiii. st. 28.

which, although small, was raised with his own money; so that the second edition of the *Orlando* may have realised some profits at last. He recorded the pleasant fact in an inscription over the door, which has become celebrated:

"Parva, sed apta mihi; sed nulli obnoxia; sed non
Sordida; parta meo sed tamen ære domus."

Small, yet it suits me; is of no offence;
Was built, not meanly, at my own expense.

What a pity (to compare great things with small) that he had not as long a life before him to enjoy it, as Gil Blas had with his own comfortable quotation over his retreat at Lirias![1]

The house still remains; but the inscription unfortunately became effaced; though the following one remains, which was added by his son Virginio:

"Sic domus hæc Areostea
Propitios habeat deos, olim ut Pindarica."

Dear to the gods, whatever come to pass,
Be Ariosto's house, as Pindar's was.

This was an anticipation—perhaps the origin—of Milton's sonnet about his own house, addressed

[1] "Inveni portum: spes et fortuna, valete;
Sat me lusistis; ludite nunc alios."

My port is found: adieu, ye freaks of chance;
The dance ye led me, now let others dance.

to "Captains and Collonels," during the civil war.[1]

Davallos made the poet his generous present in the October of the year 1531; and in the same month of the year following the *Orlando* was published as it now stands, with various insertions throughout, chiefly stories, and six additional cantos. Cardinal Ippolito had been dead some time; and the device of the beehive was exchanged for one of two vipers, with a hand and pair of shears cutting out their tongues, and the motto, "Thou hast preferred ill-will to good" (*Dilexisti malitiam super benignitatem*). The allusion is understood to have been to certain critics whose names have all perished, unless Sperone (of whom we shall hear more by and by) was one of them. The appearance of this edition was eagerly looked for; but the trouble of correcting the press, and the destruction of a theatre by fire which had been built under the poet's direction, did his health no good in its rapidly declining condition; and after suffering greatly from an obstruction, he died, much attenuated, on the sixth day of June, 1533. His decease, his fond biographers have told us,

[1] "The great Emathian conqueror bade spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
Went to the ground," &c.

took place "about three in the afternoon;" and he was "aged fifty-eight years, eight months, and twenty-eight days." His body, according to his direction, was taken to the church of the Benedictines during the night by four men, with only two tapers, and in the most private and simple manner. The monks followed it to the grave out of respect, contrary to their usual custom.

So lived, and so died, and so desired humbly to be buried, one of the delights of the world.

His son Virginio had erected a chapel in the garden of the house built by his father, and he wished to have his body removed thither; but the monks would not allow it. The tomb, at first a very humble one, was subsequently altered and enriched several times; but remains, I believe, as rebuilt at the beginning of the century before last by his grand-nephew, Ludovico Ariosto, with a bust of the poet, and two statues representing Poetry and Glory.

Ariosto was tall and stout, with a dark complexion, bright black eyes, black and curling hair, aquiline nose, and shoulders broad but a little stooping. His aspect was thoughtful, and his gestures deliberate. Titian, besides painting his portrait, designed that which appeared in the woodcut of the author's own third edition of his

poem, which has been copied into Mr. Panizzi's. It has all the look of truth of that great artist's vital hand; but, though there is an expression of the genial character of the mouth, notwithstanding the exuberance of beard, it does not suggest the sweetness observable in one of the medals of Ariosto, a wax impression of which is now before me; nor has the nose so much delicacy and grace.[1]

The poet's temperament inclined him to melancholy, but his intercourse was always cheerful. One biographer says he was strong and healthy—another, that he was neither. In all probability he was naturally strong, but weakened by a life full of emotion. He talks of growing old at forty-four, and of having been bald for some time.[2] He had a cough for many years before he died. His son says he cured it by drinking good old wine. Ariosto says that "vin fumoso" did not agree with him; but that might only mean wine of a heady

[1] This medal is inscribed "Ludovicus Ariost. Poet." and has the bee-hive on the reverse, with the motto "Pro bono malum." Ariosto was so fond of this device, that in his fragment called the *Five Cantos* (c. v. st. 26), the Paladin Rinaldo wears it embroidered on his mantle.

> "Io son de' dieci il primo, e vecchio fatto
> Di quaranta quattro anni, e il capo calvo
> Da un tempo in qua sotto il cuffiotto appiatto."
>
> *Satira* ii.

sort. The chances, under such circumstances, were probably against wine of any kind; and Panizzi thinks the cough was never subdued. His physicians forbade him all sorts of stimulants with his food.[1]

His temper and habits were those of a man wholly given up to love and poetry. In his youth he was volatile, and at no time without what is called some "affair of the heart." Every woman attracted him who had modesty and agreeableness; and as, at the same time, he was very jealous, one might imagine that his wife, who had a right to be equally so, would have led no easy life. But it is evident he could practise very generous self-denial; and probably the married portion of his existence, supposing Alessandra's sweet countenance not to have belied her, was happy on both sides. He was beloved by his family, which is never the case with the unamiable. Among his

"Il vin fumoso, a me vie più interdetto
Che 'l tosco, costì a inviti si tracanna,
E sacrilegio è non ber molto, e schietto.

(He is speaking of the wines of Hungary, and of the hard drinking expected of strangers in that country.)

Tutti li cibi son con pepe e canna,
Di amomo e d' altri aromati, che tutti
Come nocivi il medico mi danna."

Satira ii.

friends were most of the great names of the age, including a world of ladies, and the whole graceful court of Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, duke of Urbino, for which Catiglione wrote his book of the *Gentleman* (*Il Cortegiano*). Raphael addressed him a sonnet, and Titian painted his likeness. He knew Vittoria Colonna, and Veronica da Gambera, and Giulia Gonzaga (whom the Turks would have run away with), and Ippolita Sforza, the beautiful blue-stocking, who set Bandello on writing his novels, and Bembo, and Flaminio, and Berni, and Molza, and Sannazzaro, and the Medici family, and Vida, and Macchiavelli; and nobody doubts that he might have shone at the court of Leo the brightest of the bright. But he thought it "better to enjoy a little in peace, than seek after much with trouble."[1] He cared for none of the pleasures of the great, except building, and that he was content to satisfy in Cowley's fashion, with "a small house in a large garden." He was plain in his diet, disliked ceremony, and was frequently absorbed in thought. His indignation was roused by mean and brutal vices; but he took a large and liberal view of human nature in general; and, if he was somewhat free in his life, must be par-

[1] Pigna, *I Romanzi*, p. 119.

doned for the custom of the times, for his charity to others, and for the genial disposition which made him an enchanting poet. Above all, he was an affectionate son; lived like a friend with his children; and, in spite of his tendency to pleasure, supplied the place of an anxious and careful father to his brothers and sisters, who idolized him.

> "Ornabat pietas et grata modestia vatem,"

wrote his brother Gabriel,

> "Sancta fides, dictique memor, munitaque recto
> Justitia, et nullo patientia victa labore,
> Et constans virtus animi, et clementia mitis,
> Ambitione procul pulsa fastûsque tumore;
> Credere uti posses natum felicibus horis,
> Felici fulgente astro Jovis atque Dionis."[1]

> Devoted tenderness adorn'd the bard,
> And grateful modesty, and grave regard
> To his least word, and justice arm'd with right,
> And patience counting every labour light,
> And constancy of soul, and meekness too,
> That neither pride nor worldly wishes knew.
> You might have thought him born when there concur
> The sweet star and the strong, Venus and Jupiter.

His son Virginio, and others, have left a variety of anecdotes corroborating points in his cha-

[1] *Epicedium* on his brother's death. It is reprinted (perhaps for the first time since 1582) in Mr. Panizzi's Appendix to the Life, in his first volume, p. clxi.

racter. I shall give them all, for they put us into his company.

It is recorded, as an instance of his reputation for honesty, that an old kinsman, a clergyman, who was afraid of being poisoned for his possessions, would trust himself in no other hands; but the clergyman was his own grand-uncle and namesake, probably godfather; so that the compliment is not so very great.

In his youth he underwent a long rebuke one day from his father without saying a word, though a satisfactory answer was in his power; on which his brother Gabriel expressing his surprise, he said that he was thinking all the time of a scene in a comedy he was writing, for which the paternal lecture afforded an excellent study.

He loved gardening better than he understood it; was always shifting his plants, and destroying the seeds, out of impatience to see them germinate. He was rejoicing once on the coming up of some "capers," which he had been visiting every day to see how they got on, when it turned out that his capers were elder-trees!

He was perpetually altering his verses. His manuscripts are full of corrections. He wrote the exordium of the *Orlando* over and over again; and at last could only be satisfied with it in pro-

portion as it was not his own; that is to say, in proportion as it came nearer to the beautiful passage in Dante from which his ear and his feelings had caught it.[1]

He, however, discovered that correction was not always improvement. He used to say, it was with verses as with trees. A plant naturally well growing might be made perfect by a little delicate treatment; but over-cultivation destroyed its native grace. In like manner, you might perfect a happily-inspired verse by taking away any little fault of expression; but too great a polish deprived it of the charm of the first conception. It was like over-training a naturally graceful child. If it be wondered how he who corrected so much should

[1] "Le donne, i cavalier, l' arme, gli amori,
Le cortesie, le audaci imprese, io canto,"

is Ariosto's commencement;

Ladies, and cavaliers, and loves, and arms,
And courtesies, and daring deeds, I sing.

In Dante's *Purgatory* (canto xiv.), a noble Romagnese, lamenting the degeneracy of his country, calls to mind with graceful and touching regret,

"Le donne, i cavalier, gli affanni e gli agi,
Che inspiravano amore e cortesia."

The ladies and the knights, the cares and leisures,
Breathing around them love and courtesy.

succeed so well, even to an appearance of happy negligence, it is to be considered that the most impulsive writers often put down their thoughts too hastily, then correct and re-correct them in the same impatient manner; and so have to bring them round, by as many steps, to the feeling which they really had at first, though they were too hasty to do it justice.

Ariosto would have altered his house as often as his verses, but did not find it so convenient. Somebody wondering that he contented himself with so small an abode, when he built such magnificent mansions in his poetry, he said it was easier to put words together than blocks of stone.[1]

He liked Virgil; commended the style of Tibullus; did not care for Propertius; but expressed high approbation of Catullus and Horace. I suspect his favourite to have been Ovid. His son says he did not study much, nor look after books; but this may have been in his decline, or when Virginio first took to observing him. A different

[1] The original is much pithier, but I cannot find equivalents for the alliteration. He said, "Porvi le pietre e porvi le parole non è il medesimo."—*Pigna*, p. 119. According to his son, however, his remark was, that "palaces could be made in poems without money." He probably expressed the same thing in different ways to different people.

conclusion as to study is to be drawn from the corrected state of his manuscripts, and the variety of his knowledge; and with regard to books, he not only mentions the library of the Vatican as one of his greatest temptations to visit Rome, but describes himself, with all the gusto of a book-worm, as enjoying them in his chimney-corner.[1]

To intimate his secrecy in love-matters, he had an inkstand with a Cupid on it, holding a finger on his lips. "I believe it is still in existence.[2] He did not disclose his mistresses' names, as Dante did, for the purpose of treating them with contempt; nor, on the other hand, does he appear to

[1] Vide Sat. iii. "Mi sia un tempo," &c.; and the passage in Sat. vii. beginning "Di libri antiqui."

[2] The inkstand which Shelley saw at Ferrara (*Essays and Letters*, p. 149) could not have been this; probably his eye was caught by a wrong one. Doubts also, after what we know of the tricks practised upon visitors of Stratford-upon-Avon, may unfortunately be entertained of the "plain old wooden piece of furniture," the arm-chair. Shelley describes the handwriting of Ariosto as "a small, firm, and pointed character, expressing, as he should say, a strong and keen, but circumscribed energy of mind." Every one of Shelley's words is always worth consideration; but handwritings are surely equivocal testimonies of character; they depend so much on education, on times and seasons and moods, conscious and unconscious wills, &c. What would be said by an autographist to the strange old, ungraceful, slovenly handwriting of Shakspeare?

have been so indiscriminately gallant as to be fond of goitres.[1] The only mistress of whom he complained he concealed in a Latin appellation; and of her he did not complain with scorn. He had loved, besides Alessandra Benucci, a lady of the name of Ginevra; the mother of one of his children is recorded as a certain Orsolina; and that of the other was named Maria, and is understood to have been a governess in his father's family.[2]

He ate fast, and of whatever was next him, often beginning with the bread on the table before the dishes came; and he would finish his dinner with another bit of bread. "Appetiva le rape," says his good son; videlicet, he was fond of turnips. In his fourth Satire, he mentions as a favourite dish, turnips seasoned with vinegar and boiled *must* (sapa), which seems, not unjustifiably, to startle Mr. Panizzi.[3] He cared so little for good eating, that he said of himself, he should have done very well in the days when people lived on acorns.

[1] See vol. i. of the present work, pp. 30, 202, and 216.

[2] Baruffaldi, 1807; p. 105.

[3] "In casa mia mi sa meglio una rapa
Ch' io cuoca, e cotta s' un stecco m' inforco,
E mondo, e spargo poi di aceto e sapa,
Che all' altrui mensa tordo, starno, o porco
Selvaggio."

A stranger coming in one day at the dinner-hour, he ate up what was provided for both; saying afterwards, when told of it, that the gentleman should have taken care of himself. This does not look very polite; but of course it was said in jest. His son attributed this carelessness at table to absorption in his studies.

He carried this absence of mind so far, and was at the same time so good a pedestrian, that Virginio tells us he once walked all the way from Carpi to Ferrara in his slippers, owing to his having strolled out of doors in that direction.

The same biographers who describe him as a brave soldier, add, that he was a timid horseman and seaman; and indeed he appears to have eschewed every kind of unnecessary danger. It was a maxim of his, to be the last in going out of a boat. I know not what Orlando would have said to this; but there is no doubt that the good son and brother avoided no pain in pursuit of his duty. He more than once risked his life in the service of government from the perils of travelling among war-makers and banditti. Imagination finds something worthy of itself on great occasions, but is apt to discover the absurdity of staking existence on small ones. Ariosto did not care to travel out of Italy. He preferred, he says,

going round the earth in a map; visiting countries without having to pay innkeepers, and ploughing harmless seas without thunder and lightning.[1]

His outward religion, like the one he ascribed to his friend Cardinal Bembo, was "that of other people." He did not think it of use to disturb their belief; yet excused rather than blamed Luther, attributing his heresy to the necessary consequences of mooting points too subtle for human apprehension.[2] He found it impossible, how-

[1] "Chi vuole andare," &c. *Satira* iv.

[2] "Se Nicoletto o Fra Martin fan segno
D' infedele o d' eretico, ne accuso
Il saper troppo, e men con lor mi sdegno:
Perchè salendo lo intelletto in suso
Per veder Dio, non de' parerci strano
Se talor cade giù cieco e confuso."
Satira vi.

This satire was addressed to Bembo. The cardinal is said to have asked a visitor from Germany whether Brother Martin really believed what he preached; and to have expressed the greatest astonishment when told that he did. Cardinals were then what augurs were in the time of Cicero—wondering that they did not burst out a-laughing in one another's faces. This was bad; but inquisitors are a million times worse. By the Nicoletto here mentioned by Ariosto in company with Luther, we are to understand (according to the conjecture of Molini) a Paduan professor of the name of Niccolò Vernia, who was accused of holding the Pantheistic opinions of Averroes.

ever, to restrain his contempt of bigotry; and, like most great writers in Catholic countries, was a derider of the pretensions of devotees, and the discords and hypocrisies of the convent. He evidently laughed at Dante's figments about the other world; not at the poetry of them, for that he admired, and sometimes imitated, but at the superstition and presumption. He turned the Florentine's moon into a depository of nonsense; and found no hell so bad as the hearts of tyrants. The only other people he put into the infernal regions are ladies who were cruel to their lovers! He had a noble confidence in the intentions of his Creator; and died in the expectation of meeting his friends again in a higher state of existence.

Of Ariosto's four brothers, one became a courtier at Naples, another a clergyman, another an envoy to the Emperor Charles the Fifth; and the fourth, who was a cripple and a scholar, lived with Lodovico, and celebrated his memory. His two sons, whose names were Virginio and Gianbattista, and who were illegitimate (the reader is always to bear in mind the more indulgent customs of Italy in matters of this nature, especially in the poet's time), became, the first a canon in the cathedral of Ferrara, and the other an

officer in the army. It does not appear that he had any other children.

Ariosto's renown is wholly founded on the *Orlando Furioso*, though he wrote satires, comedies, and a good deal of miscellaneous poetry, all occasionally exhibiting a master-hand. The comedies, however, were unfortunately modelled on those of the ancients; and the constant termination of the verse with trisyllables contributes to render them tedious. What comedies might he not have written, had he given himself up to existing times and manners![1]

The satires are rather good-natured epistles to his friends, written with a charming ease and straightforwardness, and containing much exquisite sense and interesting autobiography.

On his lyrical poetry he set little value; and

[1] Take a specimen of this leap-frog versification from the prologue to the *Cassaria*:—

> "Questa commedia, ch' oggi *recitàtavi*
> Sarà, se nol sapete, è la *Cassària*,
> Ch' un altra volta, già vent' anni *pàssano*,
> Veder si fece sopra questi *pùlpiti*,
> Ed allora assai piacque a tutto il *pòpolo*,
> Ma non ne ripostò già degno *prèmio*,
> Che data in preda a gl' importuni ed *àvidi*
> Stampator fu," &c.

This through five comedies in five acts!

his Latin verse is not of the best order. Critics have expressed their surprise at its inferiority to that of contemporaries inferior to him in genius; but the reason lay in the very circumstance. I mean, that his large and liberal inspiration could only find its proper vent in his own language; he could not be content with potting up little delicacies in old-fashioned vessels.

The *Orlando Furioso* is, literally, a continuation of the *Orlando Innamorato;* so much so, that the story is not thoroughly intelligible without it. This was probably the reason of a circumstance that would be otherwise unaccountable, and that was ridiculously charged against him as a proof of despairing envy by the despairing envy of Sperone; namely, his never having once mentioned the name of his predecessor. If Ariosto had despaired of equalling Boiardo, he must have been hopeless of reaching posterity, in which case his silence must have been useless; and, in any case, it is clear that he looked on himself as the continuator of another's narration. But Boiardo was so popular when he wrote, that the very silence shews he must have thought the mention of his name superfluous. Still it is curious that he never should have alluded to it in the course of the poem. It could not have been from any

dislike to the name itself, or the family; for in his Latin poems he has eulogised the hospitality of the house of Boiardo.[1]

The *Furioso* continued not only what Boiardo did, but what he intended to do; for as its subject is Orlando's love, and knight-errantry in general, so its object was to extol the house of Este, and deduce it from its fabulous ancestor Ruggiero. Orlando is the open, Ruggiero the covert hero; and almost all the incidents of this supposed irregular poem, which, as Panizzi has shewn, is one of the most regular in the world, go to crown with triumph and wedlock the originator of that unworthy race. This is done on the old groundwork of Charlemagne and his Paladins, of the treacheries of the house of Gan of Maganza, and of the wars of the Saracens against Christendom. Bradamante, the Amazonian *intended* of Ruggiero, is of the same race as Orlando, and a great overthrower of infidels. Ruggiero begins with being an infidel himself, and is kept from the wars, like a second Achilles, by the devices of an anxious guardian, but ultimately fights, is converted, and marries; and Orlando all the while slays his thousands, as of old, loves, goes mad for jealousy,

[1] In the verses entitled *Bacchi Statua.*

is the foolishest and wisest of mankind (somewhat like the poet himself); and crowns the glory of Ruggiero, not only by being present at his marriage, but putting on his spurs with his own hand when he goes forth to conclude the war by the death of the king of Algiers.

The great charm, however, of the *Orlando Furioso* is not in its knight-errantry, or its main plot, or the cunning interweavement of its minor ones, but in its endless variety, truth, force, and animal spirits; in its fidelity to actual nature while it keeps within the bounds of the probable, and its no less enchanting verisimilitude during its wildest sallies of imagination. At one moment we are in the midst of flesh and blood like ourselves; at the next with fairies and goblins; at the next in a tremendous battle or tempest; then in one of the loveliest of solitudes; then hearing a tragedy, then a comedy; then mystified in some enchanted palace; then riding, dancing, dining, looking at pictures; then again descending to the depths of the earth, or soaring to the moon, or seeing lovers in a glade, or witnessing the extravagances of the great jealous hero Orlando; and the music of an enchanting style perpetually attends us, and the sweet face of Angelica glances here and there like a bud: and there are gallantries of all kinds, and

stories endless, and honest tears, and joyous bursts of laughter, and beardings for all base opinions, and no bigotry, and reverence for whatsoever is venerable, and candour exquisite, and the happy interwoven names of "Angelica and Medoro," young for ever.

But so great a work is not to be dismissed with a mere rhapsody of panegyric. Ariosto is inferior, in some remarkable respects, to his predecessors Pulci and Boiardo. His characters, for the most part, do not interest us as much as theirs by their variety and good fellowship; he invented none as Boiardo did, with the exception, indeed, of Orlando's, as modified by jealousy; and he has no passage, I think, equal in pathos to that of the struggle at Roncesvalles; for though Orlando's jealousy is pathetic, as well as appalling, the effects of it are confined to one person, and disputed by his excessive strength. Ariosto has taken all tenderness out of Angelica, except that of a kind of boarding-school first love (which, however, as hereafter intimated, may have simplified and improved her general effect), and he has omitted all that was amusing in the character of Astolfo. Knight-errantry has fallen off a little in his hands from its first youthful and trusting freshness; more sophisticate times are opening upon us; and satire

more frequently and bitterly interferes. The licentious passages (though never gross in words, like those of his contemporaries,) are not redeemed by sentiment as in Boiardo; and it seems to me, that Ariosto hardly improved so much as he might have done upon his predecessor's imitations of the classics. I cannot help thinking that, upon the whole, he had better have left them alone, and depended entirely on himself. Shelley says, he has too much fighting and "revenge,"[1]—which is true; but the revenge was only among his knights. He was himself (like my admirable friend) one of the most forgiving of men; and the fighting was the taste of the age, in which chivalry was still flourishing in the shape of such men as Bayard, and ferocity in men like Gaston de Foix. Ariosto certainly did not anticipate, any more than Shakspeare did, that spirit of human amelioration which has ennobled the present age. He thought only of reflecting nature as he found it. He is sometimes even as uninteresting as he found other people; but the tiresome passages, thank God, all belong to the house of Este! His panegyrics of Ippolito and his ancestors recoiled on the poet with a retributive dulness.

[1] Essays and Letters, *ut sup.* vol. ii. p. 125.

But in all the rest there is a wonderful invigoration and enlargement. The genius of romance has increased to an extraordinary degree in power, if not in simplicity. Its shoulders have grown broader, its voice louder and more sustained; and if it has lost a little on the sentimental side, it has gained prodigiously, not only in animal vigour, but, above all, in knowledge of human nature, and a brave and joyous candour in shewing it. The poet takes a universal, an acute, and, upon the whole, a cheerful view, like the sun itself, of all which the sun looks on; and readers are charmed to see a knowledge at once so keen and so happy. Herein lies the secret of Ariosto's greatness; which is great, not because it has the intensity of Dante, or the incessant thought and passion of Shakspeare, or the dignified imagination of Milton, to all of whom he is far inferior in sustained excellence, — but because he is like very Nature herself. Whether great, small, serious, pleasureable, or even indifferent, he still has the life, ease, and beauty of the operations of the daily planet. Even where he seems dull and commonplace, his brightness and originality at other times make it look like a good-natured condescension to our own common habits of thought and discourse; as though he did it but on purpose to leave no-

thing unsaid that could bring him within the category of ourselves. His charming manner intimates that, instead of taking thought, he chooses to take pleasure with us, and compare old notes; and we are delighted that he does us so much honour, and makes, as it were, Ariostos of us all. He is Shakspearian in going all lengths with Nature as he found her, not blinking the fact of evil, yet finding a "soul of goodness" in it, and, at the same time, never compromising the worth of noble and generous qualities. His young and handsome Medoro is a pitiless slayer of his enemies; but they were his master's enemies, and he would have lost his life, even to preserve his dead body. His Orlando, for all his wisdom and greatness, runs mad for love of a coquette, who triumphs over warriors and kings, only to fall in love herself with an obscure lad. His kings laugh with all their hearts, like common people; his mourners weep like such unaffected children of sorrow, that they must needs "swallow some of their tears."[1] His heroes, on the arrival of intelligence that excites them, leap

[1] "Le lacrime scendean tra gigli e rôse,
Là dove avvien ch' alcune sè n' inghiozzi."
Canto xii. st. 94.

Which has been well translated by Mr. Rose:

"And between rose and lily, from her eyes
Tears fall so fast, she needs must swallow some."

out of bed and write letters before they dress, from natural impatience, thinking nothing of their "dignity." When Astolfo blows the magic horn which drives every body out of the castle of Atlantes, "not a mouse" stays behind;—not, as Hoole and such critics think, because the poet is here writing ludicrously, but because he uses the same image seriously, to give an idea of desolation, as Shakspeare in *Hamlet* does to give that of silence, when "not a mouse is stirring." Instead of being mere comic writing, such incidents are in the highest epic taste of the meeting of extremes, —of the impartial eye with which Nature regards high and low. So, give Ariosto his hippogriff, and other marvels with which he has enriched the stock of romance, and Nature takes as much care of the verisimilitude of their actions, as if she had made them herself. His hippogriff returns, like a common horse, to the stable to which he has been accustomed. His enchanter, who is gifted with the power of surviving decapitation and pursuing the decapitator so long as a fated hair remains on his head, turns deadly pale in the face when it is scalped, and falls lifeless from his horse. His truth, indeed, is so genuine, and at the same time his style is so unaffected, sometimes so familiar in its grace, and sets us so much at ease in his

company, that the familiarity is in danger of bringing him into contempt with the inexperienced, and the truth of being considered old and obvious, because the mode of its introduction makes it seem an old acquaintance. When Voltaire was a young man, and (to Anglicise a favourite Gallic phrase) fancied he had *profounded* every thing deep and knowing, he thought nothing of Ariosto. Some years afterwards he took him for the first of grotesque writers, but nothing more. At last he pronounced him equally "entertaining and sublime, and humbly apologised for his error." Foscolo quotes this passage from the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*; and adds another from Sir Joshua Reynolds, in which the painter speaks of a similar inability on his own part, when young, to enjoy the perfect nature of Raphael, and the admiration and astonishment which, in his riper years, he grew to feel for it.[1]

The excessive "wildness" attributed to Ariosto is not wilder than many things in Homer, or even than some things in Virgil (such as the transformation of ships into sea-nymphs). The reason why it has been thought so is, that he rendered them more popular by mixing them with satire, and

[1] Essay on the *Narrative and Romantic Poems of the Italians*, in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. xxi.

thus brought them more universally into notice. One main secret of the delight they give us is their being poetical comments, as it were, on fancies and metaphors of our own. Thus, we say of a suspicious man, that he is suspicion itself; Ariosto turns him accordingly into an actual being of that name. We speak of the flights of the poets; Ariosto makes them literally flights — flights on a hippogriff, and to the moon. The moon, it has been said, makes lunatics; he accordingly puts a man's wits into that planet. Vice deforms beauty; therefore his beautiful enchantress turns out to be an old hag. Ancient defeated empires are sounds and emptiness; therefore the Assyrian and Persian monarchies become, in his limbo of vanities, a heap of positive bladders. Youth is headstrong, and kissing goes by favour; so Angelica, queen of Cathay, and beauty of the world, jilts warriors and kings, and marries a common soldier.

And what a creature is this Angelica! what effect has she not had upon the world in spite of all her faults, nay, probably by very reason of them! I know not whether it has been remarked before, but it appears to me, that the charm which every body has felt in the story of Angelica consists mainly in that very fact of her being

nothing but a beauty and a woman, dashed even with coquetry, which renders her so inferior in character to most heroines of romance. Her interest is founded on nothing exclusive or prejudiced. It is not addressed to any special class. She might or might not have been liked by this person or that; but the world in general will adore her, because nature has made them to adore beauty and the sex, apart from prejudices right or wrong. Youth will attribute virtues to her, whether she has them or not; middle-age be unable to help gazing on her; old-age dote on her. She is womankind itself, in form and substance; and that is a stronger thing, for the most part, than all our figments about it. Two musical names, "Angelica and Medoro," have become identified in the minds of poetical readers with the honeymoon of youthful passion.

The only false and insipid fiction I can call to mind in the *Orlando Furioso* is that of the "swans" who rescue "medals" from the river of oblivion (canto xxxv.). It betrays a singular forgetfulness of the poet's wonted verisimilitude; for what metaphor can reconcile us to swans taking an interest in medals? Popular belief had made them singers; but it was not a wise step to convert them into antiquaries.

Ariosto's animal spirits, and the brilliant hurry and abundance of his incidents, blind a careless reader to his endless particular beauties, which, though he may too often "describe instead of paint" (on account, as Foscolo says, of his writing to the many), shew that no man could paint better when he chose. The bosoms of his females "come and go, like the waves on the sea-coast in summer airs."[1] His witches draw the fish out of the water

"With simple words and a pure warbled spell."[2]

He borrows the word "painting" itself, like a true Italian and friend of Raphael and Titian, to express the commiseration in the faces of the blest for the sufferings of mortality:

"Dipinte di pietade il viso pio."[3]

Their pious looks painted with tenderness.

Jesus is very finely called, in the same passage, "il sempiterno Amante," the eternal Lover. The female sex are the

"Schiera gentil che pur adorna il mondo."[4]

The gentle bevy that adorns the world.

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[1] "Vengono e van, come onda al primo margo
Quando piacevole aura il mar combatte."
Canto vii. st. 14.

[2] "Con semplici parole e puri incanti."
Canto vi. st. 38.

[3] Canto xiv. st. 79.

[4] Canto xxviii. st. 98.

He paints cabinet-pictures like Spenser, in isolated stanzas, with a pencil at once solid and light; as in the instance of the charming one that tells the story of Mercury and his net; how he watched the Goddess of Flowers as she issued forth at dawn with her lap full of roses and violets, and so threw the net over her "one day," and "took her;"

"un dì lo prese."[1]

But he does not confine himself to these gentle pictures. He has many as strong as Michael Angelo, some as intense as Dante. He paints the conquest of America in five words:

"Veggio da diece cacciar mille."[2]
I see thousands
Hunted by tens.

He compares the noise of a tremendous battle heard in the neighbourhood to the sound of the cataracts of the Nile:

"un alto suon ch' a quel s' accorda
Con che i vicin' cadendo il Nil assorda."[3]

He "scourges" ships at sea with tempests—say rather the "miserable seamen;" while night-time grows blacker and blacker on the "exasperated waters"

[1] Canto xv. st. 57. [2] *Id.* st. 23. [3] Canto xvi. st. 56.
[4] Canto xviii. st. 142.

When Rodomont has plunged into the thick of Paris, and is carrying every thing before him ("like a serpent that has newly cast his skin, and goes shaking his three tongues under his eyes of fire"), he makes this tremendous hero break the middle of the palace-gate into a huge "window," and look through it with a countenance which is suddenly beheld by a crowd of faces as pale as death:

> "E dentro fatto l' ha tanta finestra,
> Che ben vedere e veduto esser puote
> Dai visi impressi di color di morte."[1]

The whole description of Orlando's jealousy and growing madness is Shakspearian for passion and circumstance, as the reader may see even in the prose abstract of it in this volume; and his sublimation of a suspicious king into suspicion itself (which it also contains) is as grandly and felicitously audacious as any thing ever invented by poet. Spenser thought so; and has imitated and emulated it in one of his own finest passages. Ariosto has not the spleen and gall of Dante, and therefore his satire is not so tremendous; yet it is very exquisite, as all the world have acknowledged in the instances of the lost things found in the moon, and the angel who finds Discord in a con-

[1] Canto xvii. st. 12.

vent. He does not take things so much to heart as Chaucer. He has nothing so profoundly pathetic as our great poet's *Griselda.* Yet many a gentle eye has moistened at the conclusion of the story of Isabella; and to recur once more to Orlando's jealousy, all who have experienced that passion will feel it shake them. I have read somewhere of a visit paid to Voltaire by an Italian gentleman, who recited it to him, and who (being moved perhaps by the recollection of some passage in his own history) had the tears all the while pouring down his cheeks.

Such is the poem which the gracious and good Cardinal Ippolito designated as a "parcel of trumpery." It had, indeed, to contend with more slights than his. Like all originals, it was obliged to wait for the death of the envious and the self-loving, before it acquired a popularity which surpassed all precedent. Foscolo says, that Macchiavelli and Ariosto, "the two writers of that age who really possessed most excellence, were the least praised during their lives. Bembo was approached in a posture of adoration and fear; the infamous Aretino extorted a fulsome letter of praises from the great and the learned."[1] He

[1] *Essay*, as above, p. 534.

might have added, that the writer most in request "in the circles" was a gentleman of the name of Bernardo Accolti, then called the *Unique*, now never heard of. Ariosto himself eulogised him among a shoal of writers, half of whose names have perished; and who most likely included in that half the men who thought he did not praise them enough. For such was the fact! I allude to the charming invention in his last canto, in which he supposes himself welcomed home after a long voyage. Gay imitated it very pleasantly in an address to Pope on the conclusion of his Homer. Some of the persons thus honoured by Ariosto were vexed, it is said, at not being praised highly enough; others at seeing so many praised in their company; some at being left out of the list; and some others at being mentioned at all! These silly people thought it taking too great a liberty! The poor flies of a day did not know that a god had taken them in hand to give them wings for eternity. Happily for them the names of most of these mighty personages are not known. One or two, however, took care to make posterity laugh. Trissino, a very great man in his day, and the would-be restorer of the ancient epic, had the face, in return for the poet's too honourable mention of him, to speak, in his own absurd

verses, of "Ariosto, with that *Furioso* of his, which pleases the vulgar:"

"L' Ariosto
Con quel *Furioso* suo che piace al volgo."

"*His* poem," adds Panizzi, "has the merit of not having pleased any body."[1] A sullen critic, Sperone (the same that afterwards plagued Tasso), was so disappointed at being left out, that he became the poet's bitter enemy. He talked of Ariosto taking himself for a swan and "dying like a goose" (the allusion was to the fragment he left called the *Five Cantos*). What has become of the swan Sperone? Bernardo Tasso, Torquato's father, made a more reasonable (but which turned out to be an unfounded) complaint, that Ariosto had established a precedent which poets would find inconvenient. And Macchiavelli, like the true genius he was, expressed a goodnatured and flattering regret that his friend Ariosto had left him out of his list of congratulators, in a work which was "fine throughout," and in some places "wonderful."[2]

The great Galileo knew Ariosto nearly by heart.[3]

[1] *Boiardo and Ariosto*, vol. iv. p. 318.

[2] *Life*, in Panizzi, p. ix.

[3] *Opere di Galileo*, Padova, 1744, vol. i. p. lxxii.

He is a poet whom it may require a certain amount of animal spirits to relish thoroughly. The *air* of his verse must agree with you before you can perceive all its freshness and vitality. But if read with any thing like Italian sympathy, with allowance for times and manners, and with a *sense* as well as *admittance* of the different kinds of the beautiful in poetry (two very different things), you will be almost as much charmed with the "divine Ariosto" as his countrymen have been for ages.

THE

ADVENTURES OF ANGELICA.

Argument.

PART I.—Angelica flies from the camp of Charlemagne into a wood, where she meets with a number of her suitors. Description of a beautiful natural bower. She claims the protection of Sacripant, who is overthrown, in passing, by an unknown warrior that turns out to be a damsel. Rinaldo comes up, and Angelica flies from both. She meets a pretended hermit, who takes her to some rocks in the sea, and casts her asleep by magic. They are seized and carried off by some mariners from the isle of Ebuda, where she is exposed to be devoured by an orc, but is rescued by a knight on a winged horse. He descends with her into a beautiful spot on the coast of Brittany, but suddenly misses both horse and lady. He is lured, with the other knights, into an enchanted palace, whither Angelica comes too. She quits it, and again eludes her suitors.

PART II.—Cloridan and Medoro, two Moorish youths, after a battle with the Christians, resolve to find the dead body of their master, King Dardinel, and bury it. They kill many sleepers as they pass through the enemy's camp, and then discover the body; but are surprised, and left for dead themselves. Medoro, however, survives his friend, and is cured of his wounds by Angelica, who happens to come up. She falls in love with and marries him. Account of their honeymoon in the woods. They quit them to set out for Cathay, and see a madman on the road.

PART III.—When the lovers had quitted their abode in the wood, Orlando, by chance, arrived there, and saw every where, all round him, in-doors and out-of-doors, inscriptions of "Angelica and Medoro." He tries in vain to disbelieve his eyes; finally, learns the whole story from the owner of the cottage, and loses his senses. What he did in that state, both in the neighbourhood and afar off, where he runs naked through the country. His arrival among his brother Paladins; and the result.

THE

ADVENTURES OF ANGELICA.

(CONTINUED BY ARIOSTO FROM BOIARDO.[1])

Part the First.

ANGELICA AND HER SUITORS.

ANGELICA, not at all approving her consignment to the care of Namo by Charlemagne, for the purpose of being made the prize of the conqueror, resolved to escape before the battle with the Pagans. She accordingly mounted her palfrey at once, and fled with all her might till she found herself in a wood.

Scarcely had she congratulated herself on being in a place of refuge, when she met a warrior full armed, whom with terror she recognised to be the once-loved but now detested Rinaldo. He had lost his horse, and was looking for it. Angelica turned her palfrey aside instantly, and galloped whither-

[1] See p. 58 of the present volume.

soever it chose to carry her, till she came to a river-side, where she found another of her suitors, Ferragus. She called loudly upon him for help. Rinaldo had recognised her in turn; and though he was on foot, she knew he would be coming after her.

Come after her he did. A fight between the rivals ensued; and the beauty, taking advantage of it, again fled away—fled like the fawn, that, having seen its mother's throat seized by a wild beast, scours through the woods, and fancies herself every instant in the jaws of the monster. Every sweep of the wind in the trees—every shadow across her path—drove her with sudden starts into the wildest cross-roads; for it made her feel as if Rinaldo was at her shoulders.[1]

Slackening her speed by degrees, she wandered afterwards she knew not whither, till she came, next day, to a pleasant wood that was gently stir-

[1] "Fugge tra selve spaventose e scure,
Per lochi inabitati, ermi e selvaggi.
Il mover de le frondi e di verzure
Che di cerri sentia, d' olmi e di faggi,
Fatto le avea con subite paure
Trovar di quà e di là strani viaggi;
Ch' ad ogni ombra veduta o in monte o in valle
Temea Rinaldo aver sempre alle spalle."
Canto i. st. 33.

ring with the breeze. There were two streams in it, which kept the grass always green; and when you listened, you heard them softly running among the pebbles with a broken murmur.

Thinking herself secure at last, and indeed feeling as if she were now a thousand miles off from Rinaldo—tired also with her long journey, and with the heat of the summer sun—she here determined to rest herself. She dismounted; and having relieved her horse of his bridle, and let him wander away in the fresh pasture, she cast her eyes upon a lovely natural bower, formed of wild roses, which made a sort of little room by the water's side. The bower beheld itself in the water; trees enclosed it overhead, on the three other sides; and in the middle was room enough to lie down on the sward; while the whole was so thickly trellised with the leaves and branches, that the sunbeams themselves could not enter, much less any prying sight. The place invited her to rest; and accordingly the beautiful creature laid herself down, and so gathering herself, as it were, together, went fast asleep.[1]

[1] "Ecco non lungi un bel cespuglio vede
Di spin fioriti e di vermiglie rôse,
Che de le liquide onde al specchio siede,
Chiuso dal Sol fra l' alte quercie ombrose;

She had not slept long when she was awakened by the trampling of a horse; and getting up, and looking cautiously through the trees, she perceived a cavalier, who dismounted from his steed, and sat himself down by the water in a melancholy posture. It was Sacripant, king of Circassia, one of her lovers, wretched at the thought of having missed her in the camp of King Charles. Angelica loved Sacripant no more than the rest; but, considering him a man of great conscientiousness, she thought he would make her a good protector while on her journey home. She therefore suddenly appeared before him out of the bower, like a goddess of the woods, or Venus herself, and claimed his protection.

Never did a mother bathe the eyes of her son with tears of such exquisite joy, when he came home after news of his death in battle, as the Saracen king beheld this sudden apparition with

Così vôto nel mezo, che concede
Fresca stanza fra l' ombre più nascose:
E la foglie coi rami in modo è mista,
Che 'l Sol non v' entra, non che minor vista.

Dentro letto vi fan tener' erbette,
Ch' invitano a posar chi s' appresenta.
La bella donna in mezo a quel si mette;
Ivi si scorca, et ivi s' addormenta." St. 37.

An exquisite picture!

its divine face and beautiful manners.[1] He could not help clasping her in his arms; and very different intentions were coming into his head than those for which she had given him credit, when the noise of a second warrior thundering through the woods made him remount his horse and prepare for an encounter. The stranger speedily made his appearance, a personage of a gallant and fiery bearing, clad in a surcoat white as snow, with a white streamer for a crest. He seemed more bent on having the way cleared before him than anxious about the manner of it; so couching his lance as he came, while Sacripant did the like with his, he dashed upon the Circassian with such violence as to cast him on the ground; and though his own horse slipped at the same time, he had it up again in an instant with his spurs; and so, continuing his way, was a mile off before the Saracen recovered from his astonishment.

As the stunned and stupid ploughman, who has been stretched by a thunderbolt beside his slain oxen, raises himself from the ground after

[1] And how lovely is this!

"E fuor di quel cespuglio oscuro e cieco
Fa di se bella et improvvisa mostra,
Come di selva o fuor d' ombroso speco
Diana in scena, o Citerea si mostra," &c. St. 52.

the lofty crash, and looks with astonishment at the old pine-tree near him which has been stripped from head to foot, with just such amazement the Circassian got up from his downfall, and stood in the presence of Angelica, who had witnessed it. Never in his life had he blushed so red as at that moment.

Angelica comforted him in sorry fashion, attributing the disaster to his tired and ill-fed horse, and observing that his enemy had chosen to risk no second encounter; but, while she was talking, a messenger, with an appearance of great fatigue and anxiety, came riding up, who asked Sacripant if he had seen a knight in a white surcoat and crest.

"He has this instant," answered the king, "overthrown me, and galloped away. Who is he?"

"It is no *he*," replied the messenger. "The rider who has overthrown you, and thus taken possession of whatever glory you may have acquired, is a damsel; and she is still more beautiful than brave. Bradamante is her illustrious name."

And with these words the horseman set spurs to his horse, and left the Saracen more miserable than before. He mounted Angelica's horse without a word, his own having been disabled; and so,

taking her up behind him, proceeded on the road in continued silence.[1]

They had just gone a couple of miles, when they again heard a noise, as of some powerful body in haste; and in a little while, a horse without a rider came rushing towards them, in golden trappings. It was Rinaldo's horse, Bayardo.[2] The Circassian, dismounting, thought to seize it, but was welcomed with a curvet, which made him beware how he hazarded something worse. The horse then went straight to Angelica in a way as caressing as a dog; for he remembered how she fed him in Albracca at the time when she was in love with his ungracious master: and the beauty recollected Bayardo with equal pleasure, for she had need of him. Sacripant, however, watched his opportunity, and mounted the horse; so that

[1] How admirable is the suddenness, brevity, and force of this scene! And it is as artful and dramatic as off-hand; for this Amazon, Bradamante, is the future heroine of the warlike part of the poem, and the beauty from whose marriage with Ruggiero is to spring the house of Este. Nor without her appearance at this moment, as Panizzi has shewn (vol. i. p. cvi.), could a variety of subsequent events have taken place necessary to the greatest interests of the story. All the previous passages in romance about Amazons are nothing compared with this flash of a thunderbolt.

[2] From *bayard*, old French; *bay-colour*.

now the two companions had each a separate steed. They were about to proceed more at their ease, when again a great noise was heard, and Rinaldo himself was seen coming after them on foot, threatening the Saracen with furious gestures, for he saw that he had got his horse; and he recognised, above all, in a rage of jealousy, the lovely face beside him. Angelica in vain implored the Circassian to fly with her. He asked if she had forgotten the wars of Albracca, and all which he had done to serve her, that thus she supposed him afraid of another battle.

Sacripant endeavoured to push Bayardo against Rinaldo; but the horse refusing to fight his master, he dismounted, and the two rivals encountered each other with their swords. At first they went through the whole sword-exercise to no effect; but Rinaldo, tired of the delay, raised the terrible Fusberta,[1] and at one blow cut through the other's twofold buckler of bone and steel, and benumbed his arm. Angelica turned as pale as a criminal going to execution; and, without farther waiting, galloped off through the forest, looking round every instant to see if Rinaldo was upon her.

She had not gone far when she met an old

[1] His famous sword, vide p. 48.

man who seemed to be a hermit, but was in reality a magician, coming along upon an ass. He was of venerable aspect, and seemed worn out with age and mortifications; yet, when he beheld the exquisite face before him, and heard the lady explain how it was she needed his assistance, even he, old as he really was, began to fancy himself a lover, and determined to use his art for the purpose of keeping his two rivals at a distance. Taking out a book, and reading a little in it, there issued from the air a spirit in likeness of a servant, whom he sent to the two combatants with directions to give them a false account of Orlando's having gone off to France with Angelica. The spirit disappeared; and the magician journeying with his companion to the sea-coast, raised another, who entered Angelica's horse, and carried her, to her astonishment and terror, out to sea, and so round to some lonely rocks. There, to her great comfort at first, the old man rejoined her; but his proceedings becoming very mysterious, and exciting her indignation, he cast her into a deep sleep.

It happened, at this moment, that a ship was passing by the rocks, bound upon a tragical commission from the island of Ebuda. It was the custom of that place to consign a female daily to the jaws of a sea-monster, for the purpose of avert-

ing the wrath of one of their gods; and as it was thought that the god would be appeased if they brought him one of singular beauty, the mariners of the ship seized with avidity on the sleeping Angelica, and carried her off, together with the old man. The people of Ebuda, out of love and pity, kept her, unexposed to the sea-monster, for some days; but at length she was bound to the rock where it was accustomed to seek its food; and thus, in tears and horror, with not a friend to look to, the delight of the world expected her fate. East and west she looked in vain; to the heavens she looked in vain; every where she looked in vain. That beauty which had made King Agrican come from the Caspian gates, with half Scythia, to find his death from the hands of Orlando; that beauty which had made King Sacripant forget both his country and his honour; that beauty which had tarnished the renown and the wisdom of the great Orlando himself, and turned the whole East upside down, and laid it at the feet of loveliness, has now not a soul near it to give it the comfort of a word.

Leaving our heroine awhile in this condition, I must now tell you that Ruggiero, the greatest of all the infidel warriors, had been presented by his guardian, the magician Atlantes, with two wonder-

ful gifts; the one a shield of dazzling metal, which blinded and overthrew every one that looked at it; and the other an animal which combined the bird with the quadruped, and was called the Hippogriff, or griffin-horse. It had the plumage, the wings, head, beak, and front-legs of a griffin, and the rest like a horse. It was not made by enchantment, but was a creature of a natural kind found but very rarely in the Riphæan mountains, far on the other side of the Frozen Sea.[1]

With these gifts, high mounted in the air, the young ward of Atlantes was now making the grandest of grand tours. He had for some time been confined by the magician in a castle, in order to save him from the dangers threatened in his horoscope. From this he had been set free by the lady with whom he was destined to fall in love; he had then been inveigled by a wicked fairy into her tower, and set free by a good one; and now he was on his travels through the world, to seek his mistress and pursue knightly adventures.

Casting his eyes on the coast of Ebuda, the rider of the hippogriff beheld the amazing spectacle of the lady tied to the rock; and struck with

[1] To richness and rarity, how much is added by remoteness! It adds distance to the other difficulties of procuring it.

a beauty which reminded him of her whom he loved, he resolved to deliver her from a peril which soon became too manifest.

A noise was heard in the sea; and the huge monster, the Orc, appeared half in the water and half out of it, like a ship which drags its way into port after a long and tempestuous voyage.[1] It seemed a huge mass without form except the head, which had eyes sticking out, and bristles like a boar. Ruggiero, who had dashed down to the side of Angelica, and attempted to encourage her in

[1] "Ecco apparir lo smisurato mostro
Mezo ascoso ne l' onda, e mezo sorto.
Come sospinto suol da Borea o d' Ostro
Venir lungo navilio a pigliar porto."

Canto x. st. 100.

Improved from Ovid, *Metamorph.* lib. iv. 706:

"Ecce velut navis præfixo concita rostro
Sulcat aquas, juvenum sudantibus acta lacertis;
Sic fera," &c.

As when a galley with sharp beak comes fierce,
Ploughing the waves with many a sweating oar.

Ovid is brisker and more obviously to the purpose; but Ariosto gives the ponderousness and dreary triumph of the monster. The comparison of the fly and the mastiff is in the same higher and more epic taste. The classical reader need not be told that the whole ensuing passage, as far as the combat is concerned, is imitated from Ovid's story of Perseus and Andromeda.

vain, now rose in the air; and the monster, whose attention was diverted by a shadow on the water of a couple of great wings dashing round and above him, presently felt a spear on his neck; but only to irritate him, for it could not pierce the skin. In vain Ruggiero tried to do so a hundred times. The combat was of no more effect than that of the fly with the mastiff, when it dashes against his eyes and mouth, and at last comes once too often within the gape of his snapping teeth. The orc raised such a foam and tempest in the waters with the flapping of his tail, that the knight of the hippogriff hardly knew whether he was in air or sea. He began to fear that the monster would disable the creature's wings; and where would its rider be then? He therefore had recourse to a weapon which he never used but at the last moment, when skill and courage became of no service: he unveiled the magic shield. But first he flew to Angelica, and put on her finger the ring which neutralised its effect. The shield blazed on the water like another sun. The orc, beholding it, felt it smite its eyes like lightning; and rolling over its unwieldy body in the foam which it had raised, lay turned up, like a dead fish, insensible. But it was not dead; and Ruggiero was so long in making ineffectual efforts to pierce it, that An-

gelica cried out to him for God's sake to release her while he had the opportunity, lest the monster should revive. "Take me with you," she said; "drown me; any thing, rather than let me be food for this horror."

The knight released her instantly. He set her behind him on the winged horse, and in a few minutes was in the air, transported with having deprived the brute of his delicate supper. Then, turning as he went, he imprinted on her a thousand kisses. He had intended to make a tour of Spain, which was not far off; but he now altered his mind, and descended with his prize into a lovely spot, on the coast of Brittany, encircled with oaks full of nightingales, with here and there a solitary mountain.

It was a little green meadow with a brook.[1]

[1] "Sul lito un bosco era di querce ombrose,
Dove ogn' or par che Filomena piagna;
Ch' in mezo avea un pratel con una fonte,
E quinci e quindi un solitario monte.

Quivi il bramoso cavalier ritenne
L' audace corso, e nel pratel discese."
St. 113.

What a landscape! and what a charm beyond painting he has put into it with his nightingales! and then what figures besides! A knight on a winged steed descending with a naked beauty into a meadow in the thick of woods, with "here and there a soli-

Ruggiero looked about him with transport, and was preparing to disencumber himself of his hot armour, when the blushing beauty, casting her eyes downwards, beheld on her finger the identical magic ring which her father had given her when she first entered Christendom, and which had delivered her out of so many dangers. If put on the finger only, it neutralised all enchantment; but put into the mouth, it rendered the wearer invisible. It had been stolen from her, and came into the hands of a good fairy, who gave it to Ruggiero, in order to deliver him from the wiles of a bad one. Falsehood to the good fairy's friend, his own mistress Bradamante, now rendered him unworthy of its possession; and at the moment when he thought Angelica his own beyond redemption, she vanished out of his sight. In vain he knew the secret of the ring, and the possibility of her being still present—the certainty, at all events, of her not being very far off. He ran hither and thither like a madman, hoping to clasp her in his arms, and embracing nothing but the air. In a little while she was distant far enough; and Ruggiero,

tary mountain." The mountains make no formal circle; they keep their separate distances, with their various intervals of light and shade. And what a heart of solitude is given to the meadow by the loneliness of these its waiters aloof!

stamping about to no purpose in a rage of disappointment, and at length resolving to take horse, perceived he had been deprived, in the mean time, of his hippogriff. It had loosened itself from the tree to which he had tied it, and taken its own course over the mountains. Thus he had lost horse, ring, and lady, all at once.[1]

Pursuing his way, with contending emotions, through a valley between lofty woods, he heard a great noise in the thick of them. He rushed to see what it was; and found a giant combating with a young knight. The giant got the better of the knight; and having cast him on the ground, unloosed his helmet for the purpose of slaying him, when Ruggiero, to his horror, beheld in the youth's face that of his unworthily-treated mistress Bradamante. He rushed to assault her enemy; but the giant, seizing her in his arms, took to his heels; and the penitent lover followed him with all his might, but in vain. The wretch was hidden from his eyes by the trees. At length Ruggiero, incessantly pursuing him, issued forth into a great meadow, containing a noble mansion; and here he beheld the giant in the act of dashing through the gate of it with his prize.

[1] Nothing can be more perfectly wrought up than this sudden change of circumstances.

The mansion was an enchanted one, raised by the anxious old guardian of Ruggiero for the purpose of enticing into it both the youth himself, and all from whom he could experience danger in the course of his adventures. Orlando had just been brought there by a similar device, that of the apparition of a knight carrying off Angelica; for the supposed Bradamante was equally a deception, and the giant no other than the magician himself. There also were the knights Ferragus, and Brandimart, and Grandonio, and King Sacripant, all searching for something they had missed. They wandered about the house to no purpose; and sometimes Ruggiero heard Bradamante calling him; and sometimes Orlando beheld Angelica's face at a window.[1]

At length the beauty arrived in her own veritable person. She was again on horseback, and once more on the look-out for a knight who should

[1] To feel the complete force of this picture, a reader should have been in the South, and beheld the like sudden apparitions, at open windows, of ladies looking forth in dresses of beautiful colours, and with faces the most interesting. I remember a vision of this sort at Carrara, on a bright but not too hot day (I fancied that the marble mountains there cooled it). It resembled one of Titian's women, with its broad shoulders, and boddice and sleeves differently coloured from the petticoat; and seemed literally framed in the unsashed window. But I am digressing.

conduct her safely home — whether Orlando or Sacripant she had not determined. The same road which had brought Ruggiero to the enchanted house having done as much for her, she now entered it invisibly by means of the ring.

Finding both the knights in the place, and feeling under the necessity of coming to a determination respecting one or the other, Angelica made up her mind in favour of King Sacripant, whom she reckoned to be more at her disposal. Contriving therefore to meet him by himself, she took the ring out of her mouth, and suddenly appeared before him. He had hardly recovered from his amazement, when Ferragus and Orlando himself came up; and as Angelica now was visible to all, she took occasion to deliver them from the enchanted house by hastening before them into a wood. They all followed of course, in a frenzy of anxiety and delight; but the lady being perplexed with the presence of the whole three, and recollecting that she had again obtained possession of her ring, resolved to trust her safe conduct to invisibility alone; so, in the old fashion, she left them to new quarrels by suddenly vanishing from their eyes. She stopped, nevertheless, a while to laugh at them, as they all turned their stupified faces hither and thither; then suffered them to pass her

in a blind thunder of pursuit; and so, gently following at her leisure on the same road, took her way towards the East.

It was a long journey, and she saw many places and people, and was now hidden and now seen, like the moon, till she came one day into a forest near the walls of Paris, where she beheld a youth lying wounded on the grass, between two companions that were dead.

Part the Second.

ANGELICA AND MEDORO.

Now, in order to understand who the youth was that Angelica found lying on the grass between the two dead companions, and how he came to be so lying, you must know that a great battle had been fought there between Charlemagne and the Saracens, in which the latter were defeated, and that these three people belonged to the Saracens. The two that were slain were Dardinel, king of Zumara, and Cloridan, one of his followers; and the wounded survivor was another, whose name was Medoro. Cloridan and Medoro had been loving and grateful servants of Dardinel, and very fast friends of one another; such friends, indeed, that on their own account, as well as in honour of what they did for their master, their history deserves a particular mention.

They were of a lowly stock on the coast of

Syria, and in all the various fortunes of their lord had shewn him a special attachment. Cloridan had been bred a huntsman, and was the robuster person of the two. Medoro was in the first bloom of youth, with a complexion rosy and fair, and a most pleasant as well as beautiful countenance. He had black eyes, and hair that ran into curls of gold; in short, looked like a very angel from heaven.

These two were keeping anxious watch upon the trenches of the defeated army, when Medoro, unable to cease thinking of the master who had been left dead on the field, told his friend that he could no longer delay to go and look for his dead body, and bury it. "You," said he, "will remain, and so be able to do justice to my memory, in case I fail."

Cloridan, though he delighted in this proof of his friend's noble-heartedness, did all he could to dissuade him from so perilous an enterprise; but Medoro, in the fervour of his gratitude for benefits conferred on him by his lord, was immovable in his determination to die or to succeed; and Cloridan, seeing this, determined to go with him.

They took their way accordingly out of the Saracen camp, and in a short time found them-

selves in that of the enemy. The Christians had been drinking over-night for joy at their victory, and were buried in wine and sleep. Cloridan halted a moment, and said in a whisper to his friend, "Do you see this? Ought I to lose such an opportunity of revenging our beloved master? Keep watch, and I will do it. Look about you, and listen on every side, while I make a passage for us among these sleepers with my sword."

Without waiting an answer, the vigorous huntsman pushed into the first tent before him. It contained, among other occupants, a certain Alpheus, a physician and caster of nativities, who had prophesied to himself a long life, and a death in the bosom of his family. Cloridan cautiously put the sword's point in his throat, and there was an end of his dreams. Four other sleepers were despatched in like manner, without time given them to utter a syllable. After them went another, who had entrenched himself between two horses; then the luckless Grill, who had made himself a pillow of a barrel which he had emptied. He was dreaming of opening a second barrel, but, alas, was tapped himself. A Greek and a German followed, who had been playing late at dice; fortunate, if they had continued to do so a little

longer; but they never counted a throw like this among their chances.

By this time the Saracen had grown ferocious with his bloody work, and went slaughtering along like a wild beast among sheep. Nor could Medoro keep his own sword unemployed; but he disdained to strike indiscriminately—he was choice in his victims. Among these was a certain Duke La Brett, who had his lady fast asleep in his arms. Shall I pity them? That will I not. Sweet was their fated hour, most happy their departure; for, embraced as the sword found them, even so, I believe, it dismissed them into the other world, loving and enfolded.

Two brothers were slain next, sons of the Count of Flanders, and newly-made valorous knights. Charlemagne had seen them turn red with slaughter in the field, and had augmented their coat of arms with his lilies, and promised them lands beside in Friesland. And he would have bestowed the lands, only Medoro forbade it.

The friends now discovered that they had approached the quarter in which the Paladins kept guard about their sovereign. They were afraid, therefore, to continue the slaughter any further; so they put up their swords, and picked their way cautiously through the rest of the camp into the

field where the battle had taken place. There they experienced so much difficulty in the search for their master's body, in consequence of the horrible mixture of the corpses, that they might have searched till the perilous return of daylight, had not the moon, at the close of a prayer of Medoro's, sent forth its beams right on the spot where the king was lying. Medoro knew him by his cognizance, *argent* and *gules*. The poor youth burst into tears at the sight, weeping plentifully as he approached him, only he was obliged to let his tears flow without noise. Not that he cared for death — at that moment he would gladly have embraced it, so deep was his affection for his lord; but he was anxious not to be hindered in his pious office of consigning him to the earth.

The two friends took up the dead king on their shoulders, and were hasting away with the beloved burden, when the whiteness of dawn began to appear, and with it, unfortunately, a troop of horsemen in the distance, right in their path.

It was Zerbino, prince of Scotland, with a party of horse. He was a warrior of extreme vigilance and activity, and was returning to the camp after having been occupied all night in pur-

suing such of the enemy as had not succeeded in getting into their entrenchments.[1]

" My friend," exclaimed the huntsman, " we must e'en take to our heels. Two living people must not be sacrificed to one who is dead."

With these words he let go his share of the burden, taking for granted that the friend, whose life as well as his own he was thinking to secure, would do as he himself did. But attached as Cloridan had been to his master, Medoro was far more so. He accordingly received the whole burden on his shoulders. Cloridan meantime scoured away, as fast as feet could carry him, thinking his companion was at his side: otherwise he would sooner have died a hundred times over than have left him.

In the interim, the party of the Scottish prince had dispersed themselves about the plain, for the

[1] Ariosto elsewhere represents him as the handsomest man in the world; saying of him, in a line that has become famous,

" Natura il fece, e poi roppe la stampa."
Canto x. st. 84.

— Nature made him, and then broke the mould.

(The word is generally printed *ruppe;* but I use the primitive text of Mr. Pannizi's edition.) Boiardo's handsomest man, Astolfo, was an Englishman; Ariosto's is a Scotchman. See, in the present volume, the note on the character of Astolfo, p. 41.

purpose of intercepting the two fugitives, whichever way they went; for they saw plainly they were enemies, by the alarm they shewed.

There was an old forest at hand in those days, which, besides being thick and dark, was full of the most intricate cross-paths, and inhabited only by game. Into this Cloridan had plunged. Medoro, as well as he could, hastened after him; but hampered as he was with his burden, the more he sought the darkest and most intricate paths, the less advanced he found himself, especially as he had no acquaintance with the place.

On a sudden, Cloridan having arrived at a spot so quiet that he became aware of the silence, missed his beloved friend. "Great God!" he exclaimed, "what have I done? Left him I know not where, or how!" The swift runner instantly turned about, and, retracing his steps, came voluntarily back on the road to his own death. As he approached the scene where it was to take place, he began to hear the noise of men and horses; then he discerned voices threatening; then the voice of his unhappy friend; and at length he saw him, still bearing his load, in the midst of the whole troop of horsemen. The prince was commanding them to seize him. The poor youth, however, burdened as he was, rendered it no such

easy matter; for he turned himself about like a wheel, and entrenched himself, now behind this tree and now behind that. Finding this would not do, he laid his beloved burden on the ground, and then strode hither and thither, over and round about it, parrying the horsemen's endeavours to take him prisoner. Never did poor hunted bear feel more conflicting emotions, when, surprised in her den, she stands over her offspring with uncertain heart, groaning with a mingled sound of tenderness and rage. Wrath bids her rush forward, and bury her nails in the flesh of their enemy; love melts her, and holds her back in the middle of her fury, to look upon those whom she bore.[1]

[1] "Come orsa, che l' alpestre cacciatore
Ne la pietrosa tana assalita abbia,
Sta sopra i figli con incerto core,
E freme in suono di pietà e di rabbia:
Ira la 'nvita e natural furore
A spiegar l' ugne, e a insanguinar le labbia;
Amor la 'ntenerisce, e la ritira
A riguardare a i figli in mezo l' ira."

Like as a bear, whom men in mountains start
In her old stony den, and dare, and goad,
Stands o'er her children with uncertain heart,
And roars for rage and sorrow in one mood:
Anger impels her, and her natural part,
To use her nails, and bathe her lips in blood;

Cloridan was in an agony of perplexity what to do. He longed to rush forth and die with his friend; he longed also still to do what he could, and not to let him die unavenged. He therefore halted awhile before he issued from the trees, and, putting an arrow to his bow, sent it well-aimed among the horsemen. A Scotsman fell dead from his saddle. The troop all turned to see whence the arrow came; and as they were raging and crying out, a second stuck in the throat of the loudest.

"This is not to be borne," cried the prince, pushing his horse towards Medoro; "you shall suffer for this." And so speaking, he thrust his hand into the golden locks of the youth, and drag-

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Love melts her, and, for all her angry roar,
Holds back her eyes to look on those she bore.

This stanza in Ariosto has become famous as a beautiful transcript of a beautiful passage in Statius, which, indeed, it surpasses in style, but not in feeling, especially when we consider with whom the comparison originates:

"Ut lea, quam sævo fœtam pressere cubili
Venantes Numidæ, natos erecta superstat
Mente sub incerta, torvum ac miserabile frendens:
Illa quidem turbare globos, et frangere morsu
Tela queat; sed prolis amor crudelia vincit
Pectora, et in media catulos circumspicit ira."

Thebaid, v. 414.

ged him violently backwards, intending to kill him; but when he looked on his beautiful face, he couldn't do it.

The youth betook himself to entreaty. "For God's sake, sir knight!" cried he, "be not so cruel as to deny me leave to bury my lord and master. He was a king. I ask nothing for myself—not even my life. I do not care for my life. I care for nothing but to bury my lord and master."

These words were spoken in a manner so earnest, that the good prince could feel nothing but pity; but a ruffian among the troop, losing sight even of respect for his lord, thrust his lance into the poor youth's bosom right over the prince's hand. Zerbino turned with indignation to smite him, but the villain, seeing what was coming, galloped off; and meanwhile Cloridan, thinking that his friend was slain, came leaping full of rage out of the wood, and laid about him with his sword in mortal desperation. Twenty swords were upon him in a moment; and perceiving life flowing out of him, he let himself fall down by the side of his friend.[1]

The Scotsmen, supposing both the friends to

[1] This adventure of Cloridan and Medoro is imitated from the Nisus and Euryalus of Virgil. An Italian critic, quoted by Panizzi,

be dead, now took their departure; and Medoro indeed would have been dead before long, he bled so profusely. But assistance of a very unusual sort was at hand.

A lady on a palfrey happened to be coming by, who observed signs of life in him, and was struck with his youth and beauty. She was attired with great simplicity, but her air was that of a person of high rank, and her beauty inexpres-

says, that the way in which Cloridan exposes himself to the enemy is inferior to the Latin poet's famous

"Me, me (adsum qui feci), in me convertite ferrum."

Me, me ('tis I who did the deed), slay me.

And the reader will agree with Panizzi, that he is right. The circumstance, also, of Euryalus's bequeathing his aged mother to the care of his prince, in case he fails in his enterprise, is very touching; and the main honour, both of the invention of the whole episode and its particulars, remains with Virgil. On the other hand, the enterprise of the friends in the Italian poet, which is that of burying their dead master, and not merely of communicating with an absent general, is more affecting, though it may be less patriotic; the inability of Zerbino to kill him, when he looked on his face, is extremely so; and, as Panizzi has shewn, the adventure is made of importance to the whole story of the poem, and is not simply an episode, like that in the Æneid. It serves, too, in a very particular manner to introduce Medoro worthily to the affection of Angelica; for, mere female though she be, we should hardly have gone along with her passion as we do, in a poem of any seriousness, had it been founded merely on his beauty.

sible. In short, it was the proud daughter of the lord of Cathay, Angelica herself. Finding that she could travel in safety and independence by means of the magic ring, her self-estimation had risen to such a height, that she disdained to stoop to the companionship of the greatest man living. She could not even call to mind that such lovers as the County Orlando or King Sacripant existed: and it mortified her beyond measure to think of the affection she had entertained for Rinaldo.

"Such arrogance," thought Love, "is not to be endured." The little archer with the wings put an arrow to his bow, and stood waiting for her by the spot where Medoro lay.

Now, when the beauty beheld the youth lying half dead with his wounds, and yet, on accosting him, found that he lamented less for himself than for the unburied body of the king his master, she felt a tenderness unknown before creep into every particle of her being; and as the greatest ladies of India were accustomed to dress the wounds of their knights, she bethought her of a balsam which she had observed in coming along; and so, looking about for it, brought it back with her to the spot, together with a herdsman whom she had met on horseback in search of one of his stray cattle. The blood was ebbing so fast, that the poor youth

was on the point of expiring; but Angelica bruised the plant between stones, and gathered the juice into her delicate hands, and restored his strength with infusing it into the wounds; so that, in a little while, he was able to get on the horse belonging to the herdsman, and be carried away to the man's cottage. He would not quit his lord's body, however, nor that of his friend, till he had seen them laid in the ground. He then went with the lady, and she took up her abode with him in the cottage, and attended him till he recovered, loving him more and more day by day; so that at length she fairly told him as much, and he loved her in turn; and the king's daughter married the lowly-born soldier.

O County Orlando! O King Sacripant! That renowned valour of yours, say, what has it availed you? That lofty honour, tell us, at what price is it rated? What is the reward ye have obtained for all your services? Shew us a single courtesy which the lady ever vouchsafed, late or early, for all that you ever suffered in her behalf.

O King Agrican! if you could return to life, how hard would you think it to call to mind all the repulses she gave you—all the pride and aversion and contempt with which she received your advances!

O Ferragus! O thousands of others too numerous to speak of, who performed thousands of exploits for this ungrateful one, what would you all think at beholding her in the arms of the courted boy!

Yes, Medoro had the first gathering of the kiss off the lips of Angelica — those lips never touched before — that garden of roses on the threshold of which nobody ever yet dared to venture. The love was headlong and irresistible; but the priest was called in to sanctify it; and the brideswoman of the daughter of Cathay was the wife of the cottager.

The lovers remained upwards of a month in the cottage. Angelica could not bear her young husband out of her sight. She was for ever gazing on him, and hanging on his neck. In-doors and out-of-doors, day as well as night, she had him at her side. In the morning or evening they wandered forth along the banks of some stream, or by the hedge-rows of some verdant meadow. In the middle of the day they took refuge from the heat in a grotto that seemed made for lovers; and wherever, in their wanderings, they found a tree fit to carve and write on, by the side of fount or river, or even a slab of rock soft enough for the purpose, there they were sure to leave their names

on the bark or marble; so that, what with the inscriptions in-doors and out-of-doors (for the walls of the cottage displayed them also), a visitor of the place could not have turned his eye in any direction without seeing the words

"ANGELICA AND MEDORO"

written in as many different ways as true-lovers' knots could run.[1]

Having thus awhile enjoyed themselves in the rustic solitude, the Queen of Cathay (for in the course of her adventures in Christendom she had succeeded to her father's crown) thought it time to return to her beautiful empire, and complete the triumph of love by crowning Medoro king of it.

[1] Canto xix. st. 34, &c. All the world have felt this to be a true picture of first love. The inscription may be said to be that of every other pair of lovers that ever existed, who knew how to write their names.

How musical, too, are the words "Angelica and Medoro!" Boiardo invented the one; Ariosto found the match for it. One has no end to the pleasure of repeating them. All hail to the moment when I first became aware of their existence, more than fifty years ago, in the house of the gentle artist Benjamin West! (Let the reader indulge me with this recollection.) I sighed with pleasure to look on them at that time; I sigh now, with far more pleasure than pain, to look back on them, for they never come across me but with delight; and poetry is a world in which nothing beautiful ever thoroughly forsakes us.

She took leave of the cottagers with a princely gift. The islanders of Ebuda had deprived her of every thing valuable but a rich bracelet, which, for some strange, perhaps superstitious, reason, they left on her arm. This she took off, and made a present of it to the good couple for their hospitality; and so bade them farewell.

The bracelet was of inimitable workmanship, adorned with gems, and had been given by the enchantress Morgana to a favourite youth, who was rescued from her wiles by Orlando. The youth, in gratitude, bestowed it on his preserver; and the hero had humbly presented it to Angelica, who vouchsafed to accept it, not because of the giver, but for the rarity of the gift.

The happy bride and bridegroom, bidding farewell to France, proceeded by easy journeys, and crossed the mountains into Spain, where it was their intention to take ship for the Levant. Descending the Pyrenees, they discerned the ocean in the distance, and had now reached the coast, and were proceeding by the water-side along the high road to Barcelona, when they beheld a miserable-looking creature, a madman, all over mud and dirt, lying naked in the sands. He had buried himself half inside them for shelter from the sun; but having observed the lovers as they

came along, he leaped out of his hole like a dog, and came raging against them.

But, before I proceed to relate who this madman was, I must return to the cottage which the two lovers had occupied, and recount what passed in it during the interval between their bidding it adieu and their arrival in this place.

Part the Third.

THE JEALOUSY OF ORLANDO.

DURING the course of his search for Angelica, the County Orlando had just restored two lovers to one another, and was pursuing a Pagan enemy to no purpose through a wild and tangled wood, when he came into a beautiful spot by a river's side, which tempted him to rest himself from the heat. It was a small meadow, full of daisies and butter-cups, and surrounded with trees. There was an air abroad, notwithstanding the heat, which made the shepherds glad to sit without their jerkins, and receive the coolness on their naked bodies: even the hard-skinned cattle were glad of it; and Orlando, who was armed *cap-a-pie*, was delighted to take off his helmet, and lay aside his buckler, and repose awhile in the midst of a scene so refreshing. Alas! it was the unhappiest moment of his life.

Casting his eyes around him, while about to

get off his horse, he observed a handwriting on many of the trees which he thought he knew. Riding up to the trees, and looking more closely, he was sure he knew it; and in truth it was no other than that of his adored mistress Angelica, and the inscription one of those numerous inscriptions of which I have spoken. The spot was one of the haunts of the lovers while they abode in the shepherd's cottage. Wherever the County turned his eyes, he beheld, tied together in true-lovers' knots, nothing but the words

"ANGELICA AND MEDORO."

All the trees had them—his eyes could see nothing else; and every letter was a dagger that pierced his heart.

The unhappy lover tried in vain to disbelieve what he saw. He endeavoured to compel himself to think that it was some other Angelica who had written the words; but he knew the handwriting too well. Too often had he dwelt upon it, and made himself familiar with every turn of the letters. He then strove to fancy that "Medoro" was a feigned name, intended for himself; but he felt that he was trying to delude himself, and that the more he tried, the bitterer was his conviction of the truth. He was like a bird fixing itself only

the more deeply in the lime in which it is caught, by struggling and beating its wings.

Orlando turned his horse away in his anguish, and paced it towards a grotto covered with vine and ivy, which he looked into. The grotto, both outside and in, was full of the like inscriptions. It was the retreat the lovers were so fond of at noon. Their names were written on all sides of it, some in chalk and coal,[1] others carved with a knife.

The wretched beholder got off his horse and entered the grotto. The first thing that met his eyes was a larger inscription in the Saracen lover's own handwriting and tongue—a language which the slayer of the infidels was too well acquainted with. The words were in verse, and expressed the gratitude of the "poor Medoro," the writer, for having had in his arms, in that grotto, the beautiful Angelica, daughter of King Galafron, whom so many had loved in vain. The writer invoked a blessing on every part of it, its shades, its waters, its flowers, its creeping plants; and entreated every person, high and low, who should chance to visit

[1] "Scritti, qual con carbone e qual con gesso."
Canto xxiii. st. 106.

Ariosto did not mind soiling the beautiful fingers of Angelica with coal and chalk. He knew that Love did not mind it.

it, particularly lovers, that they would bless the place likewise, and take care that it was never polluted by foot of herd.

Thrice, and four times, did the unhappy Orlando read these words, trying always, but in vain, to disbelieve what he saw. Every time he read, they appeared plainer and plainer; and every time did a cold hand seem to be wringing the heart in his bosom. At length he remained with his eyes fixed on the stone, seeing nothing more, not even the stone itself. He felt as if his wits were leaving him, so abandoned did he seem of all comfort. Let those imagine what he felt who have experienced the same emotions—who know, by their own sufferings, that this is the grief which surpasses all other griefs. His head had fallen on his bosom; his look was deprived of all confidence; he could not even speak or shed a tear. His impetuous grief remained within him by reason of his impetuosity—like water which attempts to rush out of the narrow-necked bottle, but which is so compressed as it comes, that it scarcely issues drop by drop.

Again he endeavoured to disbelieve his eyes—to conclude that somebody had wished to calumniate his mistress, and drive her lover mad, and so had done his best to imitate her handwriting.

With these sorry attempts at consolation, he again took horse, the sun having now given way to the moon, and so rode a little onward, till he beheld smoke rising out of the tops of the trees, and heard the barking of dogs and the lowing of cattle. By these signs he knew that he was approaching a village. He entered it, and going into the first house he came to, gave his horse to the care of a youth, and was disarmed, and had his spurs of gold taken off, and so went into a room that was shewn him without demanding either meat or drink, so entirely was he filled with his sorrow.

Now it happened that this was the very cottage into which Medoro had been carried out of the wood by the loving Angelica. There he had been cured of his wounds—there he had been loved and made happy—and there, wherever the County Orlando turned his eyes, he beheld the detested writing on the walls, the windows, the doors. He made no inquiries about it of the people of the house: he still dreaded to render the certainty clearer than he would fain suppose it.

But the cowardice availed him nothing; for the host seeing him unhappy, and thinking to cheer him, came in as he was getting into bed, and opened on the subject of his own accord. It was a story he told to every body who came, and

he was accustomed to have it admired; so with little preface he related all the particulars to his new guest—how the youth had been left for dead on the field, and how the lady had found him, and had him brought to the cottage—and how she fell in love with him as he grew well—and how she could be content with nothing but marrying him, though she was daughter of the greatest king of the East, and a queen herself. At the conclusion of his narrative, the good man produced the bracelet which had been given him by Angelica, as evidence of the truth of all that he had been saying.

This was the final stroke, the last fatal blow, given to the poor hopes of Orlando by the executioner, Love. He tried to conceal his misery, but it was no longer to be repressed; so finding the tears rush into his eyes, he desired to be alone. As soon as the man had retired, he let them flow in passion and agony. In vain he attempted to rest, much less to sleep. Every part of the bed appeared to be made of stones and thorns.

At length it occurred to him, that most likely they had slept in that very bed. He rose instantly, as if he had been lying on a serpent. The bed, the house, the herdsman, every thing about the place, gave him such horror and detestation, that,

without waiting for dawn, or the light of moon, he dressed himself, and went forth and took his horse from the stable, and galloped onwards into the middle of the woods. There, as soon as he found himself in the solitude, he opened all the flood-gates of his grief, and gave way to cries and outcries.

But he still rode on. Day and night did Orlando ride on, weeping and lamenting. He avoided towns and cities, and made his bed on the hard earth, and wondered at himself that he could weep so long.

"These," thought he, "are no tears that are thus poured forth. They are life itself, the fountains of vitality; and I am weeping and dying both. These are no sighs that I thus eternally exhale. Nature could not supply them. They are Love himself storming in my heart, and at once consuming me and keeping me alive with his miraculous fires. No more—no more am I the man I seem. He that was Orlando is dead and buried. His ungrateful mistress has slain him. I am but the soul divided from his body—doomed to wander here in this misery, an example to those that put their trust in love."

For the wits of the County Orlando were going; and he wandered all night round and

round in the wood, till he came back to the grotto where Medoro had written his triumphant verses. Madness then indeed fell upon him. Every particle of his being seemed torn up with rage and fury; and he drew his mighty sword, and hewed the grotto and the writing, till the words flew in pieces to the heavens. "Woe to every spot in the place in which were written the names of "Angelica and Medoro." Woe to the place itself: never again did it afford refuge from the heat of day to sheep or shepherd; for not a particle of it remained as it was. With arm and sword Orlando defaced it all, the clear and gentle fountain included. He hacked and hewed it inside and out, and cut down the branches of the trees that hung over it, and tore away the ivy and the vine, and rooted up great bits of earth and stone, and filled the sweet water with the rubbish, so that it was never clear and sweet again; and at the end of his toil, not having satisfied or being able to satisfy his soul with the excess of his violence, he cast himself on the ground in rage and disdain, and lay groaning towards the heavens.

On the ground Orlando threw himself, and on the ground he remained, his eyes fixed on heaven, his lips closed in dumbness; and thus he continued for the space of three days and three

nights, till his frenzy had mounted to such a pitch that it turned against himself. He then arose in fury, and tore off mail and breastplate, and every particle of clothing from his body, till humanity was degraded in his heroical person, and he became naked as the beasts of the field.

In this condition, and his wits quite gone, sword was forgotten as well as shield and helm; and he tore up fir-tree and ash, and began running through the woods. The shepherds hearing the cries of the strong man, and the crashing of the boughs, came hastening from all quarters to know what it was; but when he saw them he gave them chase, and smote to death those whom he reached, till the whole country was up in arms, though to no purpose; for they were seized with such terror, that while they threatened and closed after him, they avoided him. He entered cottages, and tore away the food from the tables; and ran up the craggy hills and down into the valleys; and chased beasts as well as men, tearing the fawn and the goat to pieces, and stuffing their flesh into his stomach with fierce will.

Raging and scouring onwards in this manner, he arrived one day at a bridge over a torrent, on which the fierce Rodomont had fixed himself for the purpose of throwing any one that attempted

to pass it into the water. It was a very narrow bridge, with scarcely room for two horses. But Orlando took no heed of its narrowness. He dashed right forwards against man and steed, and forced the champion to wrestle with him on foot; and, winding himself about him with hideous strength, he leaped backwards with him into the torrent, where he left him, and so mounted the opposite bank, and again rushed over the country. A more terrible bridge than this was in his way—even a precipitous pass of frightful height over a valley; but still he scoured onwards, throwing over it the agonised passengers that dared, in their ignorance of his strength, to oppose him; and so always rushing and raging, he came down the mountains by the sea-side to Barcelona, where he cast his eyes on the sands, and thought, in his idiot mind, to make himself a house in them for coolness and repose; and so he grubbed up the sand, and laid himself down in it: and this was the terrible madman whom Angelica and Medoro saw looking at them as they were approaching the city.

Neither of them knew him, nor did he know Angelica; but, with an idiot laugh, he looked at her beauty, and liked her, and came horribly towards her to carry her away. Shrieking, she put

spurs to her horse and fled; and Medoro, in a fury, came after the pursuer and smote him, but to no purpose. The great madman turned round and smote the other's horse to the ground, and so renewed his chase after Angelica, who suddenly regained enough of her wits to recollect the enchanted ring. Instantly she put it into her lips and disappeared; but in her hurry she fell from her palfrey, and Orlando forgot her in the instant, and, mounting the poor beast, dashed off with it over the country till it died; and so at last, after many dreadful adventures by flood and field, he came running into a camp full of his brother Paladins, who recognised him with tears; and, all joining their forces, succeeded in pulling him down and binding him, though not without many wounds: and by the help of these friends, and the special grace of the apostle St. John (as will be told in another place), the wits of the champion of the church were restored, and he became ashamed of that passion for an infidel beauty which the heavenly powers had thus resolved to punish.

But Angelica and Medoro pursued the rest of their journey in peace, and took ship on the coast of Spain for India; and there she crowned her bridegroom King of Cathay.

The description of Orlando's jealousy and growing madness is reckoned one of the finest things in Italian poetry; and very fine it surely is—as strong as the hero's strength, and sensitive as the heart of man. The circumstances are heightened, one after the other, with the utmost art as well as nature. There is a scriptural awfulness in the account of the hero's becoming naked; and the violent result is tremendous. I have not followed Orlando into his feats of ultra-supernatural strength. The reader requires to be prepared for them by the whole poem. Nor are they necessary, I think, to the production of the best effect; perhaps would hurt it in an age unaccustomed to the old romances.

ASTOLFO'S JOURNEY TO THE MOON.

Argument.

The Paladin Astolfo ascends on the hippogriff to the top of one of the mountains at the source of the Nile, called the Mountains of the Moon, where he discovers the Terrestrial Paradise, and is welcomed by St. John the Evangelist. The Evangelist then conveys him to the Moon itself, where he is shewn all the things that have been lost on earth, among which is the Reason of Orlando, who had been deprived of it for loving a Pagan beauty. Astolfo is favoured with a singular discourse by the Apostle, and is then presented with a vial containing the Reason of his great brother Paladin, which he conveys to earth.

ASTOLFO'S

JOURNEY TO THE MOON.

When the hippogriff loosened itself from the tree to which Ruggiero had tied it in the beautiful spot to which he descended with Angelica,[1] it soared away, like the faithful creature it was, to the house of its own master, Atlantes the magician. But not long did it remain there—no, nor the house itself, nor the magician; for the Paladin Astolfo came with a mighty horn given him by a greater magician, the sound of which overthrew all such abodes, and put to flight whoever heard it; and so the house of Atlantes vanished, and the enchanter fled; and the Paladin took possession of the griffin-horse, and rode away with it on farther adventures.

One of these was the deliverance of Senapus, king of Ethiopia, from the visitation of the dreadful harpies of old, who came infesting his table

[1] See p. 192.

as they did those of Æneas and Phineus. Astolfo drove them with his horse towards the sources of the river Nile, in the Mountains of the Moon, and pursued them with the hippogriff till they entered a great cavern, which, by the dreadful cries and lamentings that issued from the depths within it, the Paladin discovered to be the entrance from earth to Hell.

The daring Englishman, whose curiosity was excited, resolved to penetrate to the regions of darkness. "What have I to fear?" thought he; "the horn will assist me, if I want it. I'll drive the triple-mouthed dog out of the way, and put Pluto and Satan to flight."[1]

Astolfo tied the hippogriff to a tree, and pushed forward in spite of a smoke that grew thicker and thicker, offending his eyes and nostrils. It became, however, so exceedingly heavy and noisome, that he found it would be impossible to complete his enterprise. Still he pushed forward as far as he could, especially as he began to discern in the darkness something that appeared to stir with an involuntary motion. It looked like a dead body which has hung up many days in the rain and sun, and is waved unsteadily by

[1] Ariosto is here imitating Pulci, and boarding Dante. See vol. i. p. 326.

the wind. It turned out to be a condemned spirit in this first threshold of Hell, sentenced there, with thousands of others, for having been cruel and false in love. Her name was Lydia, and she had been princess of the country so called.[1] Anaxarete was among them, who, for her hard-heartedness, became a stone; and Daphne, who now discovered how she had erred in making Apollo "run so much;" and multitudes of other women; but a far greater number of men—men being worthier of punishment in offences of love, because women are proner to believe. Theseus and Jason were among them; and Amnon, the abuser of Tamar; and he that disturbed the old kingdom of Latinus.[2]

[1] I know of no story of a cruel Lydia but the poet's own mistress of that name, whom I take to be the lady here "shadowed forth." See Life, p. 114.

[2] The story of Anaxarete is in Ovid, lib. xiv. Every body knows that of Daphne, who made Apollo, as Ariosto says, "run so much" (correr tanto). Theseus and Jason are in hell, as deserters of Ariadne and Medea; Amnon, for the atrocity recorded in the Bible (2 Samuel, chap. xiii.); and Æneas for interfering with Turnus and Lavinia, and taking possession of places he had no right to. It is delightful to see the great, generous poet going upon grounds of reason and justice in the teeth of the trumped-up rights of the "pious Æneas," that shabby deserter of Dido, and canting prototype of Augustus. He turns the tables, also, with brave candour, upon the tyrannical claims of the

Astolfo would fain have gone deeper into the jaws of Hell, but the smoke grew so thick and palpable, it was impossible to move a step farther. Turning about, therefore, he regained the entrance; and having refreshed himself in a fountain hard by, and re-mounted the hippogriff, felt an inclination to ascend as high as he possibly could in the air. The excessive loftiness of the mountain above the cavern made him think that its top could be at no great distance from the region of the Moon; and accordingly he pushed his horse upwards, and rose and rose, till at length he found himself on its table-land. It exhibited a region of celestial beauty. The flowers were like beds of precious stones for colour and brightness; the grass, if you could have brought any to earth, would have been found to surpass emeralds; and the trees, whose leaves were no less beautiful, were in fruit and flower at once. Birds of as many colours were singing in the branches; the murmuring rivulets and dumb lakes were more limpid than crystal: a sweet air was for ever stirring, which reduced the warmth to a gentle

stronger sex to privileges which they deny the other; and says, that there are more faithless men in Hell than faithless women; which, if personal infidelity sends people there, most undoubtedly is the case beyond all comparison.

temperature; and every breath of it brought an odour from flowers, fruit-trees, and herbage all at once, which nourished the soul with sweetness.[1]

In the middle of this lonely plain was a palace radiant as fire. Astolfo rode his horse round about it, constantly admiring all he saw, and filled with increasing astonishment; for he found that the dwelling was thirty miles in circuit, and composed of one entire carbuncle, lucid and vermilion. What became of the boasted wonders of the world before this? The world itself, in the comparison, appeared but a lump of brute and fetid matter.[2]

As the Paladin approached the vestibule, he

[1] "Che di soävità l' alma notriva" is beautiful; but the passage, as a whole, is not well imitated from the Terrestrial Paradise of Dante. It is not bad in itself, but it is very inferior to the one that suggested it. See vol. i. p. 210, &c. Ariosto's Terrestrial Paradise was at home, among the friends who loved him, and whom he made happy.

[2] This is better; and the house made of one jewel thirty miles in circuit is an extravagance that becomes reasonable on reflection, affording a just idea of what might be looked for among the endless planetary wonders of Nature, which confound all our relative ideas of size and splendour. The "lucid vermilion" of a structure so enormous, and under a sun so pure, presents a gorgeous spectacle to the imagination. Dante himself, if he could have forgiven the poet his animal spirits and views of the Moon so different from his own, might have stood in admiration before an abode at once so lustrous and so vast.

was met by a venerable old man, clad in a white gown and red mantle, whose beard descended on his bosom, and whose aspect announced him as one of the elect of Paradise. It was St. John the Evangelist, who lived in that mansion with Enoch and Elijah, the only three mortals who never tasted death; for the place, as the saint informed him, was the Terrestrial Paradise; and the inhabitants were to live there till the angelical trumpet announced the coming of Christ "on the white cloud." The Paladin, he said, had been allowed to visit it, by the favour of God, for the purpose of fetching away to earth the lost wits of Orlando, which the champion of the Church had been deprived of for loving a Pagan, and which had been attracted out of his brains to the neighbouring sphere, the Moon.

Accordingly, after the new friends had spent two days in discourse, and meals had been served up, consisting of fruit so exquisite that the Paladin could not help thinking our first parents had some excuse for eating it,[1] the Evangelist, when the

[1] "De' frutti a lui del Paradiso diero,
Di tal sapor, ch' a suo giudizio, sanza
Scusa non sono i due primi parenti,
Se pur quei fur si poco ubbidienti."
Canto xxxiv. st. 60.

Moon arose, took him into the car which had borne Elijah to heaven; and four horses, redder than fire, conveyed them to the lunar world.

The mortal visitant was amazed to see in the Moon a world resembling his own, full of wood and water, and containing even cities and castles, though of a different sort from ours. It was strange to find a sphere so large which had seemed so petty afar off; and no less strange was it to look down on the world he had left, and be compelled to knit his brows and look sharply before he could well discern it, for it happened at the time to want light.[1]

But his guide did not leave him much time to look about him. He conducted him with due speed into a valley that contained, in one miraculous collection, whatsoever had been lost or wasted on earth. I do not speak only (says the poet) of riches and dominions, and such like gratuities of Fortune, but of things also which Fortune can neither grant nor resume. Much fame is

[1] Modern astronomers differ very much both with Dante's and Ariosto's Moon; nor do the "argent fields" of Milton appear better placed in our mysterious satellite, with its no-atmosphere and no-water, and its tremendous precipices. It is to be hoped (and believed) that knowledge will be best for us all in the end; for it is not always so by the way. It displaces beautiful ignorances.

there which Time has withdrawn—infinite prayers and vows which are made to God Almighty by us poor sinners. There lie the tears and the sighs of lovers, the hours lost in pastimes, the leisures of the dull, and the intentions of the lazy. As to desires, they are so numerous that they shadow the whole place. Astolfo went round among the different heaps, asking what they were. His eyes were first struck with a huge one of bladders which seemed to contain mighty sounds and the voices of multitudes. These he found were the Assyrian and Persian monarchies, together with those of Greece and Lydia.[1] One heap was nothing but hooks of silver and gold, which were the presents, it seems, made to patrons and great men in hopes of a return. Another consisted of snares in the shape of garlands, the manufacture of parasites. Others were verses in praise of great lords, all made of crickets which had burst themselves with singing. Chains of gold he saw there, which were pretended and unhappy love-matches; and eagles' claws, which were deputed authorities; and pairs of bellows, which were princes' favours; and overturned cities and treasuries, being treasons

[1] Very fine and scornful, I think, this. Mighty monarchies reduced to actual bladders, which, little too as they were, contained big sounds.

and conspiracies; and serpents with female faces, that were coiners and thieves; and all sorts of broken bottles, which were services rendered in miserable courts. A great heap of overturned soup[1] he found to be alms to the poor, which had been delayed till the giver's death. He then came to a great mount of flowers, which once had a sweet smell, but now a most rank one. This (*with submission*) was the present which the Emperor Constantine made to good Pope Sylvester.[2] Heaps

[1] Such, I suppose, as was given at convent-gates.

[2] The pretended gift of the palace of St. John Lateran, the foundation of the pope's temporal sovereignty. This famous passage was quoted and translated by Milton.

"Di varii fiori ad un gran monte passa
Ch' ebbe già buon odore, or putia forte.
Questo era il dono (se però dir lece)
Che Constantino al buon Silvestro fece."

Canto xxxiv. st. 80.

The lines were not so bold in the first edition. They stood thus:

"Ad un monte di rose e gigli passa,
Ch' ebbe già buon odore, or putia forte,
Ch' era corrotto; e da Giovanni intese,
Che fu un gran don ch' un gran signor mal spese."

"He came to a mount of lilies and roses, that once had a sweet smell, but now stank with corruption; and he understood from John that it was a great gift which a great lord ill expended."

The change of these lines to the stronger ones in the third

of twigs he saw next, set with bird-lime, which, dear ladies, are your charms. In short there was no end to what he saw. Thousands and thousands would not complete the list. Every thing was there which was to be met with on earth, except folly in the raw material, for that is never exported.[1]

There he beheld some of his own lost time and deeds; and yet, if nobody had been with him to make him aware of them, never would he have recognised them as his.[2]

edition, as they now stand, served to occasion a charge against Ariosto of having got his privilege of publication from the court of Rome for passages which never existed, and which he afterwards basely introduced; but, as Panizzi observes, the third edition had a privilege also; so that the papacy put its hand, as it were, to these very lines. This is remarkable; and doubtless it would not have occurred in some other ages. The Spanish Inquisition, for instance, erased it, though the holy brotherhood found no fault with the story of Giocondo.

"Sol la pazzia non v' è, poca nè assai;
Che sta quà giù, nè se ne parte mai"
St. 78.

[2] Part of this very striking passage is well translated by Harrington:

"He saw some of his own lost time and deeds,
And yet he knew them not to be his own."

I have heard these lines more than once repeated with touching earnestness by Charles Lamb.

They then arrived at something, which none of us ever prayed God to bestow, for we fancy we possess it in superabundance; yet here it was in greater quantities than any thing else in the place—I mean, sense. It was a subtle fluid, apt to evaporate if not kept closely; and here accordingly it was kept in vials of greater or less size. The greatest of them all was inscribed with the following words: "The sense of Orlando." Others, in like manner, exhibited the names of the proper possessors; and among them the frank-hearted Paladin beheld the greater portion of his own. But what more astonished him, was to see multitudes of the vials almost full to the stopper, which bore the names of men whom he had supposed to enjoy their senses in perfection. Some had lost them for love, others for glory, others for riches, others for hopes from great men, others for stupid conjurers, for jewels, for paintings, for all sorts of whims. There was a heap belonging to sophists and astrologers, and a still greater to poets.[1]

[1] Readers need not have the points of this exquisite satire pointed out to them. In noticing it, I only mean to enjoy it in their company—particularly the passage about the men accounted wisest, and the emphatic "I mean, sense" (Io dico, il senno).

Astolfo, with leave of the "writer of the dark Apocalypse," took possession of his own. He had but to uncork it, and set it under his nose, and the wit shot up to its place at once. Turpin acknowledges that the Paladin, for a long time afterwards, led the life of a sage man, till, unfortunately, a mistake which he made lost him his brains a second time.[1]

The Evangelist now presented him with the vial containing the wits of Orlando, and the travellers quitted the vale of Lost Treasure. Before they returned to earth, however, the good saint shewed his guest other curiosities, and favoured him with many a sage remark, particularly on the subject of poets, and the neglect of them by courts. He shewed him how foolish it was in princes and other great men not to make friends of those who can immortalise them; and observed, with singular indulgence, that crimes themselves might be no hindrance to a good name with posterity, if the poet were but feed well enough for spices to embalm the criminal. He instanced the cases of Homer and Virgil.

"You are not to take for granted," said he, "that Æneas was so pious as fame reports him,

[1] Admirable lesson to frailty!

or Achilles and Hector so brave. Thousands and thousands of warriors have excelled them; but their descendents bestowed fine houses and estates on great writers, and it is from their honoured pages that all the glory has proceeded. Augustus was no such religious or clement prince as the trumpet of Virgil has proclaimed him. It was his good taste in poetry that got him pardoned his iniquitous proscription. Nero himself might have fared as well as Augustus, had he possessed as much wit. Heaven and earth might have been his enemies to no purpose, had he known how to keep friends with good authors. Homer makes the Greeks victorious, the Trojans a poor set, and Penelope undergo a thousand wrongs rather than be unfaithful to her husband; and yet, if you would have the real truth of the matter, the Greeks were beaten, and the Trojans the conquerors, and Penelope was a ——.[1] See, on the other hand, what infamy has become the portion of Dido. She was honest to her heart's core; and

[1] I do not feel warranted in injuring the strength of the term here made use of by the indignant apostle, and yet am withheld from giving it in all its force by the delicacy, real or false, of the times. I must therefore leave it to be supplied by the reader according to the requirements of his own feelings.

yet, because Virgil was no friend of hers, she is looked upon as a baggage.

"Be not surprised," concluded the good saint, "if I have expressed myself with warmth on this subject. I love writers, and look upon their cause as my own, for I was a writer myself when I lived among you; and I succeeded so well in the vocation, that time and death will never prevail against me. Just therefore is it, that I should be thankful to my beloved Master, who procured me so great a lot. I grieve for writers who have fallen on evil times—men that, with pale and hungry faces, find the doors of courtesy closed against all their hardships. This is the reason there are so few poets now, and why nobody cares to study. Why should he study? The very beasts abandon places where there is nothing to feed them."

At these words the eyes of the blessed old man grew so inflamed with anger, that they sparkled like two fires. But he presently suppressed what he felt; and, turning with a sage and gracious smile to the Paladin, prepared to accompany him back to earth with his wonted serenity.

He accordingly did so in the sacred car: and Astolfo, after receiving his gentle benediction, descended on his hippogriff from the mountain,

and, joining the delighted Paladins with the vial, his wits were restored, as you have heard, to the noble Orlando.

The figure which is here cut by St. John gives this remarkable satire a most remarkable close. His association of himself with the fraternity of authors was thought a little "strong" by Ariosto's contemporaries. The lesson read to the house of Este is obvious, and could hardly have been pleasant to men reputed to be such "criminals" themselves. Nor can Ariosto, in this passage, be reckoned a very flattering or conscientious pleader for his brother-poets. Resentment, and a good jest, seem to have conspired to make him forget what was due to himself.

The original of St. John's remarks about Augustus and the ancient poets must not be omitted. It is exquisite of its kind, both in matter and style. Voltaire has quoted it somewhere with rapture.

"Non fu sì santo nè benigno Augusto
Come la tuba di Virgilio suona:
L' aver avuto in poesia buon gusto
La proscrizion iniqua gli perdona.
Nessun sapria se Neron fosse ingiusto,
Nè sua fama saria forse men buona,
Avesse avuto e terra e ciel nimici,
Se gli scrittor sapea tenersi amici.

Omero Agamennon vittorioso,
E fe' i Trojan parer vili et inerti;
E che Penelopea fida al suo sposo
Da i prochi mille oltraggi avea sofferti:
E, se tu vuoi che 'l ver non ti sia ascoso,
Tutta al contrario l' istoria converti:

Che i Greci rotti, e che Troia vittrice,
E che Penelopea fu meretrice.

Da l' altra parte odi che fama lascia
Elissa, ch' ebbe il cor tanto pudico;
Che riputata viene una bagascia,
Solo perchè Maron non le fu amico."

Canto xxxv. st. 26.

ARIODANTE AND GINEVRÀ.

Argument.

THE Duke of Albany, pretending to be in love with a damsel in the service of Ginevra, Princess of Scotland, but desiring to marry the princess herself, and not being able to compass his design by reason of her being in love with a gentleman from Italy named Ariodante, persuades the damsel, in his revenge, to personate Ginevra in a balcony at night, and so make her lover believe that she is false. Ariodante, deceived, disappears from court. News is brought of his death; and his brother Lurcanio publicly denounces Ginevra, who, according to the laws of Scotland, is sentenced to death for her supposed lawless passion. Lurcanio then challenges the unknown paramour (for the duke's face had not been discerned in the balcony); and Ariodante, who is not dead, is fighting him in disguise, when the Paladin Rinaldo comes up, discloses the whole affair, and slays the deceiver.

ARIODANTE AND GINEVRA.[1]

CHARLEMAGNE had suffered a great defeat at Paris, and the Paladin Rinaldo was sent across the Channel to ask succours of the King of England; but a tempest arose ere he could reach the coast, and drove him northwards upon that of Scotland, where he found himself in the Caledonian Forest, a place famous of old for knightly adventure. Many a clash of arms had been heard in its shady recesses — many great things had been done there by knights from all quarters, particularly the Tristans and the Launcelots, and the Gawains, and others of the Round Table of King Arthur.

[1] The main point of this story, the personation of Ginevra by one of her ladies, has been repeated by many writers — among others by Shakspeare, in *Much Ado about Nothing*. The circumstance is said to have actually occurred in Ferrara, and in Ariosto's own time. Was Ariosto himself a party? "Ariodante" almost includes his name; and it is certain that he was once in love with a lady of the name of Ginevra.

Rinaldo, bidding the ship await him at the town of Berwick, plunged into the forest with no other companion than his horse Bayardo, seeking the wildest paths he could find, in the hope of some strange adventure.[1] He put up, for the first day, at an abbey which was accustomed to entertain the knights and ladies that journeyed that way; and after availing himself of its hospitality, he inquired of the abbot and his monks if they could direct him where to find what he looked for. They said that plenty of adventures were to be met with in the forest; but that, for the most part, they remained in as much obscurity as the spots in which they occurred. It would be more becoming his valour, they thought, to exert itself where it would not be hidden; and they concluded with telling him of one of the noblest chances for renown that ever awaited a sword. The daughter of their king was in need of a defender against a certain baron of the name of Lurcanio, who sought to deprive her both of life and reputa-

[1] Rinaldo is an ambassador, and one upon very urgent business; yet he halts by the way in search of adventures. This has been said to be in the true taste of knight-errantry; and in one respect it is so. We may imagine, however, that the ship is windbound, and that he meant to return to it on change of weather. The Caledonian Forest, it is to be observed, is close at hand.

tion. He accused her of having been found in the arms of a lover without the license of the priest; which, by the laws of Scotland, was a crime only to be expiated at the stake, unless a champion could be found to disprove the charge before the end of a month. Unfortunately the month had nearly expired, and no champion yet made his appearance, though the king had promised his daughter's hand to anybody of noble blood who should establish her innocence; and the saddest part of the thing was, that she was accounted innocent by all the world, and a very pattern of modesty.

While this horrible story was being told him, the Paladin fell into a profound state of thought. After remaining silent for a little while, at the close of it he looked up, and said, "A lady then, it seems, is condemned to death for having been too kind to one lover, while thousands of our sex are playing the gallant with whomsoever they please, and not only go unpunished for it, but are admired! Perish such infamous injustice! The man was a madman who made such a law, and they are little better who maintain it. I hope in God to be able to shew them their error."

The good monks agreed, that their ancestors were very unwise to make such a law, and kings

very wrong who could, but would not, put an end to it. So, when the morning came, they speeded their guest on his noble purpose of fighting in the lady's behalf. A guide from the abbey took him a short cut through the forest towards the place where the matter was to be decided; but, before they arrived, they heard cries of distress in a dark quarter of the forest, and, turning their horses thither to see what it was, they observed a damsel between two vagabonds, who were standing over her with drawn swords. The moment the wretches saw the new comer, they fled; and Rinaldo, after re-assuring the damsel, and requesting to know what had brought her to a pass so dreadful, made his guide take her up on his horse behind him, in order that they might lose no more time. The damsel, who was very beautiful, could not speak at first, for the horror of what she had expected to undergo; but, on Rinaldo's repeating his request, she at length found words, and, in a voice of great humility, began to relate her story.

But before she begins, the poet interferes with an impatient remark. — "Of all the creatures in existence," cries he, "whether they be tame or wild, whether they are in a state of peace or of war, man is the only one that lays violent hands on the female of his species. The bear offers no injury

to his; the lioness is safe by the side of the lion; the heifer has no fear of the horns of the bull. What pest of abomination, what fury from hell, has come to disturb, in this respect, the bosom of human kind? Husband and wife deafen one another with injurious speeches, tear one another's faces, bathe the genial bed with tears, nay, sometimes with bloodshed. In my eyes the man who can allow himself to give a blow to a woman, or to hurt even a hair of her head, is a violater of nature, and a rebel against God; but to poison her, to strangle her, to take the soul out of her body with a knife,—he that can do that, never will I believe him to be a man at all, but a fiend out of hell with a man's face."[1]

Such must have been the two villains who fled

[1] All honour and glory to the manly and loving poet!

"Lavezzuola," says Panizzi, "doubts the conjugal concord of beasts, more particularly of bears. 'Ho letto presso degno autore un orso aver cavato un occhio ad un orsa con la zampa.' (I have read in an author worthy of credit, that a bear once deprived a she-bear of an eye with a blow of his paw.) The reader may choose between Ariosto and this nameless author, which of them is to be believed. I, of course, am for my poet."—Vol. i. p. 84. I am afraid, however, that Lavezzuola is right. Even turtle-doves are said not to be always the models of tenderness they are supposed to be. Brutes have even devoured their offspring. The violence is most probably owing (at least in excessive cases) to some unnatural condition of circumstances.

at the sight of Rinaldo, and who had brought the woman into this dark spot to stifle her testimony for ever.

But to return to what she was going to say.—

"You are to know, sir," she began, "that I have been from my childhood in the service of the king's daughter, the princess Ginevra. I grew up with her; I was held in honour, and I led a happy life, till it pleased the cruel passion of love to envy me my condition, and make me think that there was no being on earth to be compared to the Duke of Albany. He pretended to love me so much, that, in return, I loved him with all my heart. Unable, by degrees, to refuse him anything, I let him into the palace at night, nay, into the room which of all others the princess regarded as most exclusively her own; for there she kept her jewels, and there she was accustomed to sleep during inclement states of the weather. It communicated with the other sleeping-room by a covered gallery, which looked out to some lonely ruins; and nobody ever passed that way, day or night.

"Our intercourse continued for several months; and, finding that I placed all my happiness in obliging him, he ventured to disclose to me one day a design he had upon the princess's hand; nay, did not blush to ask my assistance in furthering it.

Judge how I set his wishes above my own, when I confess that I undertook to do so. It is true, his rank was nearer to the princess's than to mine; and he pretended that he sought the alliance merely on that account; protesting that he should love me more than ever, and that Ginevra would be little better than his wife in name. But, God knows, I did it wholly out of the excess of my desire to please him.

"Day and night I exerted all my endeavours to recommend him to the princess. Heaven is my witness that I did it in real earnest, however wrong it was. But my labour was to no purpose, for she was in love herself. She returned in all its warmth the passion of a most accomplished and valiant gentleman, who had come into Scotland with a younger brother from Italy, and who had made himself such a favourite with every body, my lover included, that the king himself had bestowed on him titles and estates, and put him on a footing with the greatest lords of the land.

"Unfortunately, the princess not only turned a deaf ear to all I said in the duke's favour, but grew to dislike him in proportion to my recommendation; so that, finding there was no likelihood of his success, his own love was secretly turned into hate and rage. He studied, little

as I dreamt he could be so base, how he could best destroy her prospect of happiness. He resorted, for this purpose, to a most crafty expedient, which I, poor fool, took for nothing but what he feigned it to be. He pretended that a whim had come into his head for seeming to prosper in his suit, out of a kind of revenge for his not being able to do so in reality; and, in order to indulge this whim, he requested me to dress myself in the identical clothes which the princess put off when she went to bed that night, and then to appear in them at my usual post in the balcony, and so let down the ladder as though I were her very self, and receive him into my arms.

"I did all that he desired, mad fool that I was; and out of the part which I played has come all this mischief. I have intimated to you that the duke and Ariodante (for such was the other's name) had been good friends before Ginevra preferred him to my false lover. Pretending therefore to be still his friend, and entering on the subject of a passion which he said he had long entertained for her, he expressed his wonder at finding it interfered with by so noble a gentleman, especially as it was returned by the princess with a fervour of which the other, if he pleased, might have ocular testimony.

"Greatly astonished at this news was Ariodante. He had received all the proofs of his mistress's affection which it was possible for chaste love to bestow, and with the greatest scorn refused to believe it; but as the duke, with the air of a man who could not help the melancholy communication, quietly persisted in his story, the unhappy lover found himself compelled, at any rate, to let him afford those proofs of her infidelity which he asserted to be in his power. The consequence was, that Ariodante came with his brother to the ruins I spoke of; and there the two were posted on the night when I played my unhappy part in the balcony. He brought Lurcanio with him (that was the brother's name), because he suspected that the duke had a design on his life, not conceiving what he alleged against Ginevra to be possible. Lurcanio, however, was not in the secret of his brother's engagement with the princess. It had been disclosed hitherto neither to him nor to any one, the lady not yet having chosen to divulge it to the king himself. Ariodante, therefore, requested his brother to take his station at a little distance, out of sight of the palace, and not to come to him unless he should call: 'otherwise, my dear brother,' concluded he, 'stir not a step, if you love me.'

"'Doubt me not,' said Lurcanio; and, with these words, the latter entrenched himself in his post.

"Ariodante now stood by himself, gazing at the balcony,—the only person visible at that moment in all the place. In a few minutes the Duke of Albany appeared below it, making the signal to which I had been accustomed; and then I, in my horrible folly, became visible to the eyes of both, and let down the ladder.

"Meantime Lurcanio, beginning to be very uneasy at the mysterious situation in which he found himself, and to have the most alarming fears for his brother, had cautiously picked his way after him at a little distance; so that he also, though still hidden in the shade of the lonely houses, perceived all that was going on.

"I was dressed, as I had undertaken to be, in the identical clothes which the princess had put off that night; and as I was not unlike her in air and figure, and wore the golden net with red tassels peculiar to ladies of the royal family, and the two brothers, besides, were at quite sufficient distance to be deceived, I was taken by both of them for her very self. The duke impatiently mounted the ladder; I received him as impatiently in my arms; and circumstances, though from very different

feelings, rendered the caresses that passed between us of unusual ardour.

"You may imagine the grief of Ariodante. It rose at once to despair. He did not call out; so that, had not his brother followed him, still worse would have ensued than did; for he drew his sword, and was proceeding in distraction to fall upon it, when Lurcanio rushed in and stopped him. 'Miserable brother!' exclaimed he, 'are you mad? Would you die for a woman like this? You see what a wretch she is. I discern all your case at once, and, thank God, have preserved you to turn your sword where it ought to be turned, against the defender of such a pattern of infamy.'

"Ariodante put up his sword, and suffered himself to be led away by his brother. He even pretended, in a little while, to be able to review his condition calmly, but not the less had he secretly resolved to perish. Next day he disappeared, nobody knew whither; and about eight days afterwards, news was secretly brought to Ginevra, by a pilgrim, that he had thrown himself from a headland into the sea.

"'I met him by chance,' said the pilgrim, 'and we happened to be standing on the top of the headland, conversing, when he cried out to me,

'Relate to the princess what you beheld on parting from me; and add, that the cause of it was my having seen too much.' Happy had it been for me had I been blind!' And with these words,' concluded the pilgrim, 'he leaped into the sea below, and was instantly buried beneath it.'

"The princess turned as pale as death at this story, and for a while remained stupified. But, alas! what a scene was it my fate to witness, when she found herself in her chamber at night, able to give way to her misery. She tore her clothes, and her very flesh, and her beautiful hair, and kept repeating the last words of her lover with amazement and despair.

The disappearance of Ariodante, and a rumour which transpired of his having slain himself on account of some hidden anguish, surprised and afflicted the whole court. But his brother Lurcanio evinced more and more his impatience at it, and let fall the most terrible words. At length he entered the court when the king was holding one of his fullest assemblies, and laid open, as he thought, the whole matter; setting forth how his unhappy brother had secretly, but honourably, loved the princess; how she had professed to love him in return; and how she had grossly deceived him, and played him impudently false before his

own eyes. He concluded with calling upon her unknown paramour to come forth, and shew reasons against him with his sword why she ought not to die.

"I need not tell you what the king suffered at hearing this strange and terrible recital. He lost no time in sharply investigating the truth of the allegation; and for this purpose, among other proceedings, he sent for the ladies of his daughter's chamber. You may judge, sir,—especially as, I blush to say it, I still loved the Duke of Albany,—that I could not await an examination like that. I hastened to meet the duke, who was as anxious to get me out of the way as I was to go; and to this end, professing the greatest zeal for my security, he commissioned two men to convey me secretly to a fortress he possessed in this forest. 'Tis at no great distance from the place where Heaven sent you to my deliverance. You saw, sir, how little those wretches intended to take me anywhere except to my grave; and by this you may judge of the agonies and shame I have endured in knowing what a dupe I have been to one of the cruelest of men. But thus it is that Love treats his most faithful servants."

The damsel here concluded her story; and the Paladin, rejoicing at having become possessed of

all that was required to establish the falsehood of the duke, proceeded with her on his road to St. Andrews, where the lists had been set up for the determination of the question. The king and his court were anxiously praying at that instant for the arrival of some champion to fight with the dreaded Lurcanio; for the month, as I have stated, was nearly expired, and this terrible brother appeared to have the business all his own way; so that the stake was soon to be looked for at which the hapless Ginevra was to die.

Fast and eagerly the Paladin rode for St. Andrews, with his squire and the trembling damsel, who was now agitated for new reasons, though the knight gave her assurances of his protection. They were not far from the city when they found people talking of a champion who had certainly arrived, but whose name was unknown, and his face constantly concealed by his visor. Even his own squire, it seems, did not know him; for the man had but lately been taken into his service. Rinaldo, as soon as he entered the city, left the damsel in a place of security, and then spurred his horse to the scene of action, when he found the accuser and the champion in the very midst of the fight. The Paladin, whose horse, notwithstanding the noise of the combat, had been heard

coming like a tempest, and whose sudden and heroical appearance turned all eyes towards him, rode straight to the royal canopy, and, begging the king to stop the combat, disclosed the whole state of the matter, to the enchantment of all present, except the Duke of Albany; for the villain himself was on horseback there in state as grand constable, and had been feasting his miserable soul with the hope of seeing Ginevra condemned. The combatants were soon changed. Instead of Lurcanio and the unknown champion (whom the new comer had taken care to extol for his generosity), it was the Paladin and the Duke that were opposed; and horribly did the latter's heart fail him. But he had no remedy. Fight he must. Rinaldo, desirous to make short work of him, took his station with fierce delight; and at the third sound of the trumpets, the Duke was forced to couch his spear and meet him at full charge. Sheer went the Paladin's ashen staff through the false bosom, sending the villain to the earth eight feet beyond the saddle. The conqueror dismounted instantly, and unlacing the man's helmet, enabled the king to hear his dying confession, which he had hardly finished, when life forsook him. Rinaldo then took off his own helmet; and the king, who had

seen the great Paladin before, and who felt more rejoiced at his daughter's deliverance than if he had lost and regained his crown, lifted up his hands to heaven, and thanked God for having honoured her innocence with so illustrious a defender.

The other champion, who, in the mean time, had been looking on through the eyelets of his visor, was now entreated to disclose his own face. He did so with peculiar emotion, and king and all recognised with transport the face of the loved and, as it was supposed, lost Ariodante. The pilgrim, however, had told no falsehood. The lover had indeed thrown himself into the sea, and disappeared from the man's eyes; but (as oftener happens than people suppose) the death which was desired when not present became hated when it was so; and Ariodante, lover as he was, rising at a little distance, struck out lustily for the shore, and reached it.[1] He felt even a secret contempt for his attempt to kill himself; yet putting up at an hermitage, became interested in the reports concerning the princess, whose sorrow flattered,

[1] This is quite in Ariosto's high and bold taste for truth under all circumstances. A less great and unmisgiving poet would have had the lover picked up by a fisherman.

and whose danger, though he could not cease to think her guilty, afflicted him. He grew exasperated with the very brother he loved, when he found that Lurcanio pursued her thus to the death; and on all these accounts he made his appearance at the place of combat to fight him, though not to slay. His purpose was to seek his own death. He concluded that Ginevra would then see who it was that had really loved her, while his brother would mourn the rashness which made him pursue the destruction of a woman. "Guilty she is," thought he, "but no such guilt can deserve so cruel a punishment. Besides, I could not bear that she should die before me. She is still the woman I love, still the idol of my thoughts. Right or wrong, I must die in her behalf."

With this intention he purchased a suit of black armour, and obtained a squire unknown in those parts, and so made his appearance in the lists. What ensued there I need not repeat; but the king was so charmed with the issue of the whole business, with the resuscitation of the favourite whom he thought dead, and the restoration of the more than life of his beloved daughter, that, to the joy of all Scotland, and at the special

instance of the great Paladin, he made the two lovers happy without delay; and the bride brought her husband for dowry the title and estates of the man who had wronged him.

SUSPICION.

SUSPICION.[1]

It is impossible to conceive a nobler thing in the world than a just prince — a thoroughly good man, who shuns no part of the burden of his duty, though it bend him double; who loves and cares for his people as a father does for his children, and

[1] This daring and grand apologue is not in the *Furioso*, but in a poem which Ariosto left unfinished, and which goes under the name of the *Five Cantos*. The fragment, though bearing marks of want of correction, is in some respects a beautiful, and altogether a curious one, especially as it seems to have been written after the *Furioso*; for it touches in a remarkable manner on several points of morals and politics, and contains an extravagance wilder than any thing in Pulci,—a whale *inhabited* by knights! It was most likely for these reasons that his friend Bembo and others advised him to suppress it. Was it written in his youth? The apologue itself is not one of the least daring attacks on the Borgias and such scoundrels, who had just then afflicted Italy.

Did Ariosto, by the way, omit Macchiavelli in his list of the friends who hailed the close of his great poem, from not knowing what to make of his book entitled the *Prince*? It has perplexed all the world to this day, and is not unlikely to have made a particularly unpleasant impression on a mind at once so candid and humane as Ariosto's.

who is almost incessantly occupied in their welfare, very seldom for his own.

Such a man puts himself in front of dangers and difficulties in order that he may be a shield to others; for he is not a mercenary, taking care of none but himself when he sees the wolf coming; he is the right good shepherd, staking his own life in that of his flock, and knowing the faces of every one of them, just as they do his own.

Such princes, in times of old, were Saturn, Hercules, Jupiter, and others—men who reigned gently, yet firmly, equal to all chances that came, and worthy of the divine honours that awaited them. For mankind could not believe that they quitted the world in the same way as other men. They thought they must be taken up into heaven to be the lords of demigods.

When the prince is good, the subjects are good, for they always imitate their masters; or at least, if the subjects cannot attain to this height of virtue, they at least are not as bad as they would be otherwise; and, at all events, public decency is observed. Oh, blessed kingdoms that are governed by such hearts! and oh, most miserable ones that are at the mercy of a man without justice—a fellow-creature without feelings!

Our Italy is full of such, who will have their re-

ward from the pens of posterity. Greater wretches never appeared in the shapes of Neros and Caligulas, or any other such monsters, let them have been who they might. I enter not into particulars; for it is always better to speak of the dead than the living; but I must say, that Agrigentum never fared worse under Phalaris, nor Syracuse under Dionysius, nor Thebes in the hand of the bloody tyrant Eteocles, even though all those wretches were villains by whose orders every day, without fault, without even charge, men were sent by dozens to the scaffold or into hopeless exile.

But they are not without torments of their own. At the core of their own hearts there stands an inflicter of no less agonies. There he stands every day and every moment—one who was born of the same mother with Wrath, and Cruelty, and Rapine, and who never ceased tormenting his infant brethren before they saw the light. His name is Suspicion.[1]

[1] A tremendous fancy this last!

"Sta lor la pena, de la qual dicea
Che nacque quando la brutt' Ira nacque,
La Crudeltade, e la Rapina rea;
E quantunque in un ventre con lor giacque,
Di tormentarle mai non rimanea."

Yes, Suspicion;—the cruelest visitation, the worst evil spirit and pest that ever haunted with its poisonous whisper the mind of human being. This is their tormentor by excellence. He does not trouble the poor and lowly. He agonises the brain in the proud heads of those whom fortune has put over the heads of their fellow-creatures. Well may the man hug himself on his freedom who fears nobody because nobody hates him. Tyrants are in perpetual fear. They never cease thinking of the mortal revenge taken upon tormentors of their species openly or in secret. The fear which all men feel of the one single wretch, makes the single wretch afraid of every soul among them.

Hear a story of one of these miserables, which, whatever you may think of it, is true to the letter; such letter, at all events, as is written upon the hearts of his race. He was one of the first who took to the custom of wearing beards; for, great as he was, he had a fear of the race of barbers! He built a tower in his palace, guarded by deep ditches and thick walls. It had but one drawbridge and one bay-window. There was no other opening; so that the very light of day had scarcely admittance, or the inmates a place to breathe at. In this tower he slept; and it was his wife's busi-

ness to put a ladder down for him when he came in. A dog kept watch at the drawbridge; and except the dog and the wife, not a soul was to be discerned about the place. Yet he had such little trust in her, that he always sent spies to look about the room before he withdrew for the night.

Of what use was it all? The woman herself killed him with his own sword, and his soul went straight to hell.

Rhadamanthus, the judge there, thrust him under the boiling lake, but was astonished to find that he betrayed no symptoms of anguish. He did not weep and howl as the rest did, or cry out, "I burn, I burn!" He evinced so little suffering, that Rhadamanthus said, "I must put this fellow into other quarters." Accordingly, he sent him into the lowest pit, where the torments are beyond all others.

Nevertheless, even here he seemed to be under no distress. At length they asked him the reason. The wretch then candidly acknowledged, that hell itself had no torments for him, compared with those which suspicion had given him on earth.

The sages of hell laid their heads together at this news. Amelioration of his lot on the part of a sinner was not to be thought of in a place

of eternal punishment; so they called a parliament together, the result of which was an unanimous conclusion, that the man should be sent back to earth, and consigned to the torments of suspicion for ever.

He went; and the earthly fiend re-entered his being anew with a subtlety so incorporate, that their two natures were identified, and he became SUSPICION ITSELF. Fruits are thus engrafted on wild stocks. One colour thus becomes the parent of many, when the painter takes a portion of this and of that from his palette in order to imitate flesh.

The new being took up his abode on a rock by the sea-shore, a thousand feet high, girt all about with mouldering crags, which threatened every instant to fall. It had a fortress on the top, the approach to which was by seven drawbridges, and seven gates, each locked up more strongly than the other; and here, now this moment, constantly thinking Death is upon him, Suspicion lives in everlasting terror. He is alone. He is ever watching. He cries out from the battlements, to see that the guards are awake below, and never does he sleep day or night. He wears mail upon mail, and mail again, and feels the less safe the more he puts on; and is always altering and

strengthening everything on gate, and on barricado, and on ditch, and on wall. And do whatever he will, he never seems to have done enough.

Great poet, and good man, Ariosto! your terrors are better than Dante's; for they warn, as far as warning can do good, and they neither afflict humanity nor degrade God.

Spenser has imitated this sublime piece of pleasantry; for, by a curious intermixture of all which the mind can experience from such a fiction, pleasant it is in the midst of its sublimity,—laughable with satirical archness, as well as grand and terrible in the climax. The transformation in Spenser is from a jealous man into Jealousy. His wife has gone to live with the Satyrs, and a villain has stolen his money. The husband, in order to persuade his wife to return, steals into the horde of the Satyrs, by mixing with their flock of goats,—as Norandino does in a passage imitated from Homer by Ariosto. The wife flatly refuses to do any such thing, and the poor wretch is obliged to steal out again.

"So soon as he the prison-door did pass,
He ran as fast as both his feet could bear,
And never lookèd who behind him was,
Nor scarcely who before. Like as a bear
That creeping close among the hives, to rear
An honeycomb, the wakeful dogs espy,
And him assailing, sore his carcass tear,
That hardly he away with life does fly,
Nor stays till safe himself he see from jeopardy.

Nor stay'd he till he came unto the place
Where late his treasure he entombèd had;
Where, when he found it not (for Trompart base
Had it purloinèd for his master bad),

With extreme fury he became quite mad,
And ran away—ran with himself away;
That who so strangely had him seen bestad,
With upstart hair and staring eyes' dismay,
From Limbo-lake him late escapèd sure would say.

High over hills and over dales he fled,
As if the wind him on his wings had borne;
Nor bank nor bush could stay him, when he sped
His nimble feet, as treading still on thorn;
Grief, and Despite, and Jealousy, and Scorn,
Did all the way him follow hard behind;
And he himself himself loath'd so forlorn,
So shamefully forlorn of womankind,
That, as a snake, still lurkèd in his wounded mind.

Still fled he forward, looking backward still;
Nor stay'd his flight nor fearful agony
Till that he came unto a rocky hill
Over the sea suspended dreadfully,
That living creature it would terrify
To look a-down, or upward to the height:
From thence he threw himself dispiteously,
All desperate of his fore-damnèd spright,
That seem'd no help for him was left in living sight.

But through long anguish and self-murd'ring thought,
He was so wasted and forpinèd quite,
That all his substance was consumed to nought,
And nothing left but like an airy sprite;
That on the rocks he fell so flit and light,
That he thereby received no hurt at all;
But chancèd on a craggy cliff to light;
Whence he with crooked claws so long did crawl,
That at the last he found a cave with entrance small.

Into the same he creeps, and thenceforth there
Resolved to build his baleful mansion,
In dreary darkness, and continual fear
Of that rock's fall, which ever and anon
Threats with huge ruin him to fall upon,
That he dare never sleep, but that one eye
Still ope he keeps for that occasion;
Nor ever rests he in tranquillity,
The roaring billows beat his bower so boisterously.

Nor ever is he wont on aught to feed
But toads and frogs, his pasture poisonous,
Which in his cold complexion do breed
A filthy blood, or humour rancorous,
Matter of doubt and dread suspicious,
That doth with cureless care consume the heart,
Corrupts the stomach with gall vicious,
Cross-cuts the liver with internal smart,
And doth transfix the soul with death's eternal dart.

Yet can he never die, but dying lives,
And doth himself with sorrow new sustain,
That death and life at once unto him gives,
And painful pleasure turns to pleasing pain;
There dwells he ever, miserable swain,
Hateful both to himself and every wight;
Where he, through privy grief and horror vain,
Is waxen so deformed, that he has quite
Forgot he was a man, and Jealousy is hight."

Spenser's picture is more subtly wrought and imaginative than Ariosto's; but it removes the man farther from ourselves, except under very special circumstances. Indeed, it might be taken rather for a picture of hypochondria than jealousy, and under that

aspect is very appalling. But nothing, under more obvious circumstances, comes so dreadfully home to us as Ariosto's poor wretch feeling himself "the less safe the more he puts on," and calling out dismally from his tower, a thousand feet high, to the watchers and warders below to see that all is secure.

ISABELLA.

ISABELLA.[1]

RODOMONT, King of Algiers, was the fiercest of all the enemies of Christendom, not out of love for his own faith (for he had no piety), but out of hatred to those that opposed him. He had now quarrelled, however, with his friends too. He had been rejected by a lady, in favour of the Tartar king, Mandricardo, and mortified by the publicity of the rejection before his own lord paramount, Agramante, the leader of the infidel armies. He could not bear the rejection; he could not bear the sanction of it by his liege lord; he resolved to quit the scene of warfare and return to Africa; and, in

[1] The ingenious martyrdom in this story, which has been told by other writers of fiction, is taken from an alleged fact related in Barbaro's treatise *De Re Uxoria*. It is said, indeed, to have been actually resorted to more than once; and possibly may have been so, even from a knowledge of it; for what is more natural with heroical minds than that the like outrages should produce the like virtues? But the colouring of Ariosto's narration is peculiarly his own; and his apostrophe at the close beautiful.

the course of his journey thither, he had come into the south of France, where, observing a sequestered spot that suited his humour, he changed his mind as to going home, and persuaded himself he could live in it for the rest of his life. He accordingly took up his abode with his attendants in a chapel, which had been deserted by its clergy during the rage of war.

This vehement personage was standing one morning at the door of the chapel in a state of unusual thoughtfulness, when he beheld coming towards him, through a path in the green meadow before it, a lady of a lovely aspect, accompanied by a bearded monk. They were followed by something covered with black, which they were bringing along on a great horse.

Alas! the lady was the widow of Zerbino, the Scottish prince, who spared the life of Medoro, and who now himself lay dead under that pall. He had expired in her arms from wounds inflicted during a combat with Mandricardo; and she had been thrown by the loss into such anguish of mind that she would have died on his sword but for the intervention of the hermit now with her, who persuaded her to devote the rest of her days to God in a nunnery. She had now come into Provence with the good man for that purpose, and to bury

the corpse of her husband in the chapel which they were approaching.

Though the lady seemed lost in grief, and was very pale, and had her hair all about the ears, and though she did nothing but weep and lament, and looked in all respects quite borne down with her misery, nevertheless she was still so beautiful that love and grace appeared to be indestructible in her aspect. The moment the Saracen beheld her, he dismissed from his mind all the determinations he had made to hate and detest

The gentle bevy, that adorns the world.

He was bent solely on obtaining the new angel before him. She seemed precisely the sort of person to make him forget the one that had rejected him. Advancing, therefore, to meet her without delay, he begged, in as gentle a manner as he could assume, to know the cause of her sorrow.

The lady, with all the candour of wretchedness, explained who she was, and how precious a burden she was conveying to its last home, and the resolution she had taken to withdraw from a vain world into the service of God. The proud pagan, who had no belief in a God, much less any respect for restraints or fidelities of what kind soever, forgot his assumed gravity when he heard this deter-

mination, and laughed outright at the simplicity of such a proceeding. He pronounced it, in his peremptory way, to be foolish and frivolous; compared it with the miser who, in burying a treasure, does good neither to himself nor any one else; and said, that lions and serpents might indeed be shut up in cages, but not things lovely and innocent.

The monk, overhearing these observations, thought it his duty to interfere. He calmly opposed all which the other asserted, and then proceeded to set forth a repast of spiritual consolation not at all to the Saracen's taste. The fierce warrior interrupted the preacher several times; told him that he had nothing to do with the lady, and that the sooner he returned to his cell the better; but the hermit, nothing daunted, went on with his advice till his antagonist lost all patience. He laid hands on his sacred person; seized him by the beard; tore away as much of it as he grasped; and at length worked himself up into such a pitch of fury, that he griped the good man's throat with all the force of a pair of pincers, and, swinging him twice or thrice round, as one might a dog, flung him off the headland into the sea.

What became of the poor creature I cannot say. Reports are various. Some tell us that he

was found on the rocks, dashed all to pieces, so that you could not distinguish foot from head; others, that he fell into the sea at the distance of three miles, and perished in consequence of not knowing how to swim, in spite of the prayers and tears that he addressed to Heaven; others again affirm, that a saint came and assisted him, and drew him to shore before people's eyes. I must leave the reader to adopt which of these accounts he looks upon as the most probable.

The Pagan, as soon as he had thus disposed of the garrulous hermit, turned towards Isabella (for that was the lady's name), and with a face somewhat less disturbed, began to talk to her in the common language of gallantry, protesting that she was his life and soul, and that he should not know what to do without her; for the sweetness of her appearance mollified even him; and indeed, with all his violence, he would rather have possessed her by fair means than by foul. He therefore flattered himself that, by a little hypocritical attention, he should dispose her to return his inclinations.

On the other hand, the poor disconsolate creature, who, in a country unknown to her, and a place so remote from help, felt like a mouse in the cat's claws, began casting in her mind by what

possible contrivance she could escape from such a wretch with honour. She had made up her mind to perish by her own hand, rather than be faithless, however unwillingly, to the dear husband that had died in her arms: but the question was, how she could protect herself from the pagan's violence, before she had secured the means of so doing; for his manner was becoming very impatient, and his speeches every moment less and less civil.

At length an expedient occurred to her. She told him, that if he would promise to respect her virtue, she would put him in possession of a secret that would redound far more to his honour and glory, than any wrong which he could inflict on the innocent. She conjured him not to throw away the satisfaction he would experience all the rest of his life from the consciousness of having done right, for the sake of injuring one unhappy creature. "There were thousands of her sex," she observed, "with cheerful as well as beautiful faces, who might rejoice in his affection; whereas the secret she spoke of was known to scarcely a soul on earth but herself."

She then told him the secret; which consisted in the preparation of a certain herb boiled with ivy and rue over a fire of cypress-wood, and squeezed

into a cup by hands that had never done harm. The juice thus obtained, if applied fresh every month, had the virtue of rendering bodies invulnerable. Isabella said she had seen the herb in the neighbourhood, as she came along, and that she would not only make the preparation forthwith, but let its effects be proved on her own person. She only stipulated, that the receiver of the gift should swear not to offend her purity in deed or word.

The fierce infidel took the oath immediately. It delighted him to think that he should be enabled to have his fill of war and slaughter for nothing; and the oath was the more easy to him, inasmuch as he had no intention of keeping it.

The poor Isabella went into the fields to look for her miraculous herb, still, however, attended by the Saracen, who would not let her go out of his sight. She soon found it; and then going with him into his house, passed the rest of the day and the whole night in preparing the mixture with busy solemnity,—Rodomont always remaining with her.

The room became so hot and close with the fire of cypress-wood, that the Saracen, contrary to his law and indeed to his habits, indulged himself in drinking; and the consequence was, that, as

soon as it was morning, Isabella lost no time in proving to him the success of her operations. "Now," she said, "you shall be convinced how much in earnest I have been. You shall see all the virtue of this blessed preparation. I have only to bathe myself thus, over the head and neck, and if you then strike me with all your force, as though you intended to cut off my head,—which you must do in good earnest,—you will see the wonderful result."

With a glad and rejoicing countenance the paragon of virtue held forth her neck to the sword; and the bestial pagan, giving way to his natural violence, and heated perhaps beyond all thought of a suspicion with his wine, dealt it so fierce a blow, that the head leaped from the shoulders.

Thrice it bounded on the ground where it fell, and a clear voice was heard to come out of it, calling the name of "Zerbino," doubtless in joy of the rare way which its owner had found of escaping from the Saracen.

O blessed soul, that heldest thy virtue and thy fidelity dearer to thee than life and youth! go in peace, thou soul blessed and beautiful. If any words of mine could have force in them sufficient to endure so long, hard would I labour to give them all the worthiness that art can bestow, so

that the world might rejoice in thy name for thousands and thousands of years. Go in peace, and take thy seat in the skies, and be an example to womankind of faith beyond all weakness.

TASSO:

Critical Notice of his Life and Genius.

Critical Notice

OF

TASSO'S LIFE AND GENIUS.[1]

THE romantic poetry of Italy having risen to its highest and apparently its most lawless pitch in the *Orlando Furioso*, a reaction took place in the next age in the *Jerusalem Delivered*. It did not hurt, however, the popularity of Ariosto. It only

[1] My authorities for this notice are, Black's *Life of Tasso* (2 vols. 4to, 1810), his original, Serassi, *Vita di Torquato Tasso* (do. 1790), and the works of the poet in the Pisan edition of Professor Rosini (33 vols. 8vo, 1832). I have been indebted to nothing in Black which I have not ascertained by reference to the Italian biographer, and quoted nothing stated by Tasso himself but from the works. Black's Life, which is a free version of Serassi's, modified by the translator's own opinions and criticism, is elegant, industrious, and interesting. Serassi's was the first copious biography of the poet founded on original documents; and it deserved to be translated by Mr. Black, though servile to the house of Este, and, as might be expected, far from being always ingenuous. Among other instances of this writer's want of candour is the fact

increased the number of poetic readers; and under the auspices, or rather the control, of a Luther-fearing Church, produced, if not as classical a work as it claimed to be, or one, in the true sense of the word, as catholic as its predecessor, yet certainly a far more Roman Catholic, and at the same time very delightful fiction. The circle of fabulous narrative was thus completed, and a link formed, though in a very gentle and qualified manner, both with Dante's theocracy and the obvious regularity of the *Æneid*, the oldest romance of Italy.

The author of this epic of the Crusades was

of his having been the discoverer and suppresser of the manuscript review of Tasso by Galileo. The best summary account of the poet's life and writings which I have met with is Ginguéné's, in the fifth volume of his *Histoire Littéraire*, &c. It is written with his usual grace, vivacity, and acuteness, and contains a good notice of the Tasso controversy. As to the Pisan edition of the works, it is the completest, I believe, in point of contents ever published, comprises all the controversial criticism, and is, of course, very useful; but it contains no life except Manso's (now known to be very inconclusive), has got a heap of feeble variorum comments on the *Jerusalem*, no notes worth speaking of to the rest of the works, and, notwithstanding the claim in the title-page to the merit of a "better order," has left the correspondence in a deplorable state of irregularity, as well as totally without elucidation. The learned Professor is an agreeable writer, and, I believe, a very pleasant man, but he certainly is a provoking editor.

of a family so noble and so widely diffused, that, under the patronage of the emperors and the Italian princes, it flourished in a very remarkable manner, not only in its own country, but in Flanders, Germany, and Spain. There was a Tasso once in England, ambassador of Philip the Second; another, like Cervantes, distinguished himself at the battle of Lepanto; and a third gave rise to the sovereign German house of Tour and Taxis. *Taxus* is the Latin of Tasso. The Latin word, like the Italian, means both a badger and a yew-tree; and the family in general appear to have taken it in the former sense. The animal is in their coat of arms. But the poet, or his immediate relatives, preferred being more romantically shadowed forth by the yew-tree. The parent stock of the race was at Bergamo in Lombardy; and here was born the father of Tasso, himself a poet of celebrity, though his fame has been eclipsed by that of his son.

Bernardo Tasso, author of many elegant lyrics, of some volumes of letters, not uninteresting but too florid, and of the *Amadigi*, an epic romance now little read, was a man of small property, very honest and good-hearted, but restless, ambitious, and with a turn for expense beyond his means. He attached himself to various princes, with little

ultimate advantage, particularly to the unfortunate Sanseverino, Prince of Salerno, whom he faithfully served for many years. The prince had a high sense of his worth, and would probably have settled him in the wealth and honours he was qualified to adorn, but for those Spanish oppressions in the history of Naples which ended in the ruin of both master and servant. Bernardo, however, had one happy interval of prosperity; and during this, at the age of forty-six, he married Porzia di Rossi, a young lady of a rich and noble family, with a claim to a handsome dowry. He spent some delightful years with her at Sorrento, a spot so charming as to have been considered the habitation of the Sirens; and here, in the midst of his orange-trees, his verses, and the breezes of an aromatic coast, he had three children, the eldest of whom was a daughter named Cornelia, and the youngest the author of the *Jerusalem Delivered*. The other child died young. The house distinguished by the poet's birth was restored from a dilapidated condition by order of Joseph Bonaparte when King of Naples, and is now an hotel.

Torquato Tasso was born March the 11th, 1544, nine years after the death of Ariosto, who was intimate with his father. He was very devoutly brought up; and grew so tall, and became

so premature a scholar, that at nine, he tells us, he might have been taken for a boy of twelve. At eleven, in consequence of the misfortunes of his father, who had been exiled with the Prince of Salerno, he was forced to part from his mother, who remained at home to look after a dowry which she never received. Her brothers deprived her of it; and in two years' time she died, Bernardo thought by poison. Twenty-four years afterwards her illustrious son, in the midst of his own misfortunes, remembered with sighs the tears with which the kisses of his poor mother were bathed when she was forced to let him go.[1]

[1] In the beautiful fragment beginning, *O del grand' Apennino:*

" Me dal sen della madre empia fortuna
Pargoletto divelse. Ah! di que' baci,
Ch' ella bagnò di lagrime dolenti,
Con sospir mi rimembra, e degli ardenti
Preghi, che sen portár l' aure fugaci,
Ch' io giunger non dovea più volto a volto
Fra quelle braccia accolto
Con nodi così stretti e sì tenaci.
Lasso! e seguii con mal sicure piante,
Qual Ascanio, o Camilla, il padre errante."

Me from my mother's bosom my hard lot
Took when a child. Alas! though all these years
I have been used to sorrow,
I sigh to think upon the floods of tears
Which bathed her kisses on that doleful morrow:

The little Torquato following, as he says, like another Ascanius, the footsteps of his wandering father, joined Bernardo in Rome. After two years' study in that city, partly under an old priest who lived with them, the vicissitudes of the father's lot took away the son first to Bergamo, among his relations, and then to Pesaro, in the duchy of Urbino, where his education was associated for nearly two years with that of the young prince, afterwards Duke Francesco Maria the Second (della Rovere), who retained a regard for him through life. In 1559 the boy joined his father in Venice, where the latter had been appointed secretary to the Academy; but next year he was withdrawn from these pleasing varieties of scene by the parental delusion so common in the history of men of letters—the study of the law; which Bernardo intended him to pursue henceforth in the city of Padua. He accordingly arrived in Padua at the age of sixteen and a half,

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I sigh to think of all the prayers and cries
She wasted, straining me with lifted eyes:
For never more on one another's face
Was it our lot to gaze and to embrace!
Her little stumbling boy,
Like to the child of Troy,
Or like to one doomed to no haven rather,
Followed the footsteps of his wandering father.

and fulfilled his legal destiny by writing the poem of *Rinaldo*, which was published in the course of less than two years at Venice. The goodnatured and poetic father, convinced by this specimen of jurisprudence how useless it was to thwart the hereditary passion, permitted him to devote himself wholly to literature, which he therefore went to study in the university of Bologna; and there, at the early age of nineteen, he began his *Jerusalem Delivered;* that is to say, he planned it, and wrote three cantos, several of the stanzas of which he retained when the poem was matured. He quitted Bologna, however, in a fit of indignation at being accused of the authorship of a satire; and after visiting some friends at Castelvetro and Correggio, returned to Padua on the invitation of his friend Scipio Gonzaga, afterwards cardinal, who wished him to become a member of an academy he had instituted, called the *Eterei* (Ethereals). Here he studied his favourite philosopher, Plato, and composed three Discourses on Heroic Poetry, dedicated to his friend. He now paid a visit to his father in Mantua, where the unsettled man had become secretary to the duke; and here, it is said, he fell in love with a young lady of a distinguished family, whose name was Laura Peperara; but this did not hinder him from re-

turning to his Paduan studies, in which he spent nearly the whole of the following year. He was then informed that the Cardinal of Este, to whom he had dedicated his *Rinaldo*, and with whom interest had been made for the purpose, had appointed him one of his attendants, and that he was expected at Ferrara by the 1st of December. Returning to Mantua, in order to prepare for this appointment with his father, he was seized with a dangerous illness, which detained him there nearly a twelvemonth longer. On his recovery he hastened to Ferrara, and arrived in that city on the last day of October, 1565, the first of many years of glory and misery.

The cardinal of Este was the brother of the reigning Duke of Ferrara, Alfonso the Second, grandson of the Alfonso of Ariosto. It is curious to see the two most celebrated romantic poets of Italy thrown into unfortunate connexion with two princes of the same house and the same respective ranks. Tasso's cardinal, however, though the poet lost his favour, and though very little is known about him, left no such bad reputation behind him as Ippolito. It was in the service of the duke that the poet experienced his sufferings.

This prince, who was haughty, ostentatious, and quarrelsome, was, at the time of the stranger's

arrival, rehearsing the shows and tournaments intended to welcome his bride, the sister of the Emperor Maximilian the Second. She was his second wife. The first was a daughter of the rival house of Tuscany, which he detested; and the marriage had not been happy. The new consort arrived in the course of a few weeks, entering the city in great pomp; and for a time all went happily with the young poet. He was in a state of ecstasy with the beauty and grandeur he beheld around him—obtained the favourable notice of the duke's two sisters and the duke himself—went on with his *Jerusalem Delivered*, which, in spite of the presence of Ariosto's memory, he was resolved to load with praises of the house of Este; and in this tumult of pride and expectation, he beheld the duke, like one of the heroes of his poem, set out to assist the emperor against the Turks at the head of three hundred gentlemen, armed at all points, and mantled in various-coloured velvets embroidered with gold.

To complete the young poet's happiness, or commence his disappointments, he fell in love, notwithstanding the goddess he had left in Mantua, with the beautiful Lucrezia Bendidio, who does not seem, however, to have loved in return; for she became the wife of a Macchiavelli. Among

his rivals was Guarini, who afterwards emulated him in pastoral poetry, and who accused him on this occasion of courting two ladies at once.

Guarini's accusation has been supposed to refer to the duke's sister Leonora, whose name has become so romantically mixed up with the poet's biography; but the latest inquiries render it probable that the allusion was to Laura Peperara.[1] The young poet, however, who had not escaped the influence of the free manners of Italy, and whose senses and vanity may hitherto have been more interested than his heart, rhymed and flattered on all sides of him, not of course omitting the charms of princesses. In order to win the admiration of the ladies in a body, he sustained for three days, in public, after the fashion of the times, *Fifty Amorous Conclusions;* that is to say, affirmations on the subject of love; doubtless to the equal delight of his fair auditors and himself, and the creation of a good deal of jealousy and ill-will on the part of such persons of his own sex as had not wit or spirits enough for the display of so much logic and love-making.

In 1569, the death of his father, who had been made governor of Ostiglia by the Duke of Mantua,

[1] Rosini, *Saggio sugli Amori di Torquato Tasso*, &c., in the Professor's edition of his works, vol. xxxiii.

cost the loving son a fit of illness; but the continuation of his *Jerusalem*, an *Oration* spoken at the opening of the Ferrarese academy, the marriage of Leonora's sister Lucrezia with the Prince of Urbino, and the society of Leonora herself, who led the retired life of a person in delicate health, and was fond of the company of men of letters, helped to divert him from melancholy recollections; and a journey to France, at the close of the year following, took him into scenes that were not only totally new, but otherwise highly interesting to the singer of Godfrey of Boulogne. The occasion of it was a visit of the cardinal, his master, to the court of his relative Charles the Ninth. It is supposed that his Eminence went to confer with the king on matters relative to the disputes which not long afterwards occasioned the detestable massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Before his departure, Tasso put into the hands of one of his friends a document, which, as it is very curious, and serves to illustrate perhaps more than one cause of his misfortunes, is here given entire.

Memorial left by Tasso on his departure to France.

" Since life is frail, and it may please Almighty God to dispose of me otherwise in this my journey

to France, it is requested of Signor Ercole Rondinelli that he will, in that case, undertake the management of the following concerns:

"In the first place, with regard to my compositions, it is my wish that all my love-sonnets and madrigals should be collected and published; but with regard to those, whether amatory or otherwise, *which I have written for any friend*, my request is, that *they should be buried with myself*, save only the one commencing "*Or chè l' aura mia dolce altrove spira.*" I wish the publication of the *Oration* spoken in Ferrara at the opening of the academy, of the four books on *Heroic Poetry*, of the six last cantos of the *Godfrey* (the *Jerusalem*), and of those stanzas of the two first which shall seem least imperfect. All these compositions, however, are to be submitted to the review and consideration of Signor Scipio Gonzaga, of Signor Domenico Veniero, and of Signor Battista Guarini, who, I persuade myself, will not refuse this trouble, when they consider the zealous friendship I have entertained for themselves.

"Let them be informed, too, that it was my intention that they should cut and hew without mercy whatever should appear to them defective or superfluous. With regard to additions or changes, I should wish them to proceed more cau-

tiously, since, after all, the poem would remain imperfect. As to my other compositions, should there be any which, to the aforesaid Signor Rondinelli and the other gentlemen, might seem not unworthy of publication, let them be disposed of according to their pleasure.

"In respect to my property, I wish that such part of it as I have *pledged to Abram* —— for twenty-five lire, and seven pieces of arras, which are *likewise in pledge to Signor Ascanio for thirteen scudi,* together with whatever I have in this house, should be sold, and that the overplus of the proceeds should go to defray the expense of the following epitaph to be inscribed on a monument to my father, whose body is in St. Polo. And should any impediment take place in these matters, I entreat Signor Ercole *to have recourse to the favour of the most excellent Madame Leonora, whose liberality I confide in, for my sake.*

"I, Torquato Tasso, have written this, Ferrara, 1570."

I shall have occasion to recur to this document by and by. I will merely observe, for the present, that the marks in it, both of imprudence in money-matters and confidence in the goodwill of a princess, are very striking. "Abram" and

"Signor Ascanio" were both Jews. The pieces of arras belonged to his father; and probably this was an additional reason why the affectionate son wished the proceeds to defray the expense of the epitaph. The epitaph recorded his father's poetry, state-services, and vicissitudes of fortune.

Tasso was introduced to the French king as the poet of a French hero and of a Catholic victory; and his reception was so favourable (particularly as the wretched Charles, the victim of his mother's bigotry, had himself no mean poetic feeling), that, with a rash mixture of simplicity and self-reliance (respect makes me unwilling to call it self-importance), the poet expressed an impolitic amount of astonishment at the favour shewn at court to the Hugonots—little suspecting the horrible design it covered. He shortly afterwards broke with his master the cardinal; and it is supposed that this unseasonable escape of zeal was the cause. He himself appears to have thought so.[1] Perhaps the cardinal only wanted to get the imprudent poet back to Italy; for, on Tasso's return to Ferrara, he was not only received into the service of the duke with a salary of some fifteen golden scudi a-month, but told that he was exempted from any

[1] *Lettere Inedite*, p. 33, in the *Opere*, vol. xvii.

particular duty, and might attend in peace to his studies. Balzac affirms, that while Tasso was at the court of France, he was so poor as to beg a crown from a friend; and that, when he left it, he had the same coat on his back that he came in.[1] The assertions of a professed wit and hyperbolist are not to be taken for granted; yet it is difficult to say to what shifts improvidence may not be reduced.

The singer of the house of Este would now, it might have been supposed, be happy. He had leisure; he had money; he had the worldly honours that he was fond of; he occupied himself in perfecting the *Jerusalem;* and he wrote his beautiful pastoral, the *Aminta*, which was performed before the duke and his court to the delight of the brilliant assembly. The duke's sister Lucrezia, princess of Urbino, who was a special friend of the poet, sent for him to read it to her at Pesaro; and in the course of the ensuing carnival it was performed with similar applause at the court of her father-in-law. The poet had been as much enchanted by the spectacle which the audience at Ferrara presented to his eyes, as the audience with the loves and graces with which he enriched their

[1] *Entretiens*, 1663, p. 169, quoted by Serassi, pp. 175, 182.

stage. The shepherd Thyrsis, by whom he meant himself, reflected it back upon them in a passage of the performance. It is worth while dwelling on this passage a little, because it exhibits a brief interval of happiness in the author's life, and also shews us what he had already begun to think of courts at the moment he was praising them. But he ingeniously contrives to put the praise in his own mouth, and the blame in another's. The shepherd's friend, Mopsus (by whom Tasso is thought to have meant Speroni), had warned him against going to court:

" Però, figlio,
Va su l' avviso," &c.

" Therefore, my son, take my advice. Avoid
The places where thou seest much drapery,
Colours, and gold, and plumes, and heraldries,
And such new-fanglements. But, above all,
Take care how evil chance or youthful wandering
Bring thee upon the house of Idle Babble."
" What place is that?" said I; and he resumed;—
" Enchantresses dwell there, who make one see
Things as they are not, ay and hear them too.
That which shall seem pure diamond and fine gold
Is glass and brass; and coffers that look silver,
Heavy with wealth, are baskets full of bladders.[1]

[1] Suggested by Ariosto's furniture in the Moon.

The very walls there are so strangely made,
They answer those who talk; and not in syllables,
Or bits of words, like echo in our woods,
But go the whole talk over, word for word,
With something else besides, that no one said.[1]
The tressels, tables, bedsteads, curtains, lockers,
Chairs, and whatever furniture there is
In room or bedroom, all have tongues and speech,
And are for ever tattling. Idle Babble
Is always going about, playing the child;
And should a dumb man enter in that place,
The dumb would babble in his own despite.
And yet this evil is the least of all
That might assail thee. Thou might'st be arrested
In fearful transformation to a willow,
A beast, fire, water,—fire for ever sighing,
Water for ever weeping."—Here he ceased:
And I, with all this fine foreknowledge, went
To the great city; and, by Heaven's kind will,
Came where they live so happily. The first sound
I heard was a delightful harmony,
Which issued forth, of voices loud and sweet;—
Sirens, and swans, and nymphs, a heavenly noise
Of heavenly things;—which gave me such delight,
That, all admiring, and amazed, and joyed,
I stopped awhile quite motionless. There stood
Within the entrance, as if keeping guard
Of those fine things, one of a high-souled aspect,
Stalwart withal, of whom I was in doubt

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[1] This was a trick which he afterwards thought he had reason to complain of in a style very different from pleasantry.

Whether to think him better knight or leader.[1]
He, with a look at once benign and grave,
In royal guise, invited me within;
He, great and in esteem; me, lorn and lowly.
Oh, the sensations and the sights which then
Shower'd on me! Goddesses I saw, and nymphs
Graceful and beautiful, and harpers fine
As Linus or as Orpheus; and more deities,
All without veil or cloud, bright as the virgin
Aurora, when she gluds immortal eyes,
And sows her beams and dew-drops, silver and gold.

In the summer of 1574, the Duke of Ferrara went to Venice to pay his respects to the successor of Charles the Ninth, Henry the Third, then on his way to France from his kingdom of Poland. Tasso went with the duke, and is understood to have taken the opportunity of looking for a printer of his *Jerusalem*, which was now almost finished. Writers were anxious to publish in that crafty city, because its government would give no security of profit to books printed elsewhere. Alfonso, who was in mourning for Henry's brother, and to whom mourning itself only suggested a new occa-

[1] Alfonso. The word for "leader" in the original, *duce*, made the allusion more obvious. The epithet "royal," in the next sentence, conveyed a welcome intimation to the ducal ear, the house of Este being very proud of its connexion with the sovereigns of Europe, and very desirous of becoming royal itself.

sion of pomp and vanity, took with him to this interview five hundred Ferrarese gentlemen, all dressed in long black cloaks; who walking about Venice (says a reporter) "by twos and threes," wonderfully impressed the inhabitants with their "gravity and magnificence."[1] The mourners feasted, however; and Tasso had a quartan fever, which delayed the completion of the *Jerusalem* till next year. This was at length effected; and now once more, it might have been thought, that the writer would have reposed on his laurels.

But Tasso had already begun to experience the uneasiness attending superiority; and, unfortunately, the strength of his mind was not equal to that of his genius. He was of an ultra-sensitive temperament, and subject to depressing fits of sickness. He could not calmly bear envy. Sarcasm exasperated, and hostile criticism afflicted him. The seeds of a suspicious temper were nourished by prosperity itself. The author of the *Armida* and the *Jerusalem* began to think the attentions he received unequal to his merits; while with a sort of hysterical mixture of demand for applause, and provocation of censure, he not only condescended to read his poems in manuscript

[1] Serassi, vol. i. p. 210.

wherever he went, but, in order to secure the goodwill of the papal licenser, he transmitted it for revisal to Rome, where it was mercilessly criticised for the space of two years by the bigots and hypocrites of a court, which Luther had rendered a very different one from that in the time of Ariosto.

This new source of chagrin exasperated the complexional restlessness, which now made our author think that he should be more easy anywhere than in Ferrara; perhaps more able to communicate with and convince his critics; and, unfortunately, he permitted himself to descend to a weakness the most fatal of all others to a mind naturally exalted and ingenuous. Perhaps it was one of the main causes of all which he suffered. Indeed, he himself attributed his misfortunes to irresolution. What I mean in the present instance was, that he did not disdain to adopt underhand measures. He shewed a face of satisfaction with Alfonso, at the moment that he was taking steps to exchange his court for another. He wrote for that purpose to his friend Scipio Gonzaga, now a prelate at the court of Rome, earnestly begging him, at the same time, not to commit him in their correspondence; and Scipio, who was one of his kindest and most indulgent

friends, and who doubtless saw that the Duke of Ferrara and his poet were not of dispositions to accord, did all he could to procure him an appointment with one of the family of the Medici.

Most unhappily for this speculation (and perhaps even the good-natured Gonzaga took a little more pleasure in it on that account), Alfonso inherited all the detestation of his house for that lucky race; and it is remarkable, that the same jealousies which hindered Ariosto's advancement with the Medici were still more fatal to the hopes of Tasso; for they served to plunge him into the deepest adversity. In vain he had warnings given him, both friendly and hostile. The princess, now Duchess of Urbino, who was his particular friend, strongly cautioned him against the temptation of going away. She said he was watched. He himself thought his letters were opened; and probably they were. They certainly were at a subsequent period. Tasso, however, persisted, and went to Rome. Scipio Gonzaga introduced him to Cardinal Ferdinand de' Medici, afterwards Grand Duke of Tuscany; and Ferdinand made him offers of protection so handsome, that they excited his suspicion. The self-tormenting poet thought they savoured more of hatred to the Este

family, than honour to himself.[1] He did not accept them. He did nothing at Rome but make friends, in order to perplex them; listen to his critics, in order to worry himself; and perform acts of piety in the churches, by way of shewing that the love-scenes in the *Jerusalem* were innocent. For the bigots had begun to find something very questionable in mixing up so much love with war. The bloodshed they had no objection to. The love bearded their prejudices, and excited their envy.

Tasso returned to Ferrara, and endeavoured to solace himself with eulogising two fair strangers who had arrived at Alfonso's court,—Eleonora Sanvitale, who had been newly married to the Count of Scandiano (a Tiene, not a Boiardo, whose line was extinct), and Barbara Sanseverino, Countess of Sala, her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law, who was a Juno-like beauty, wore her hair in the form of a crown. The still more beautiful daughter-in-law had an under lip such as Anacreon or Sir John Suckling would have admired,—pouting and provoking,—*προκαλουμενον φιλημα*. Tasso wrote verses on them both, but

[1] "Alla lor magnanimità è convenevole il mostrar, ch' amor delle virtù, non odio verso altri, gli abbia già mossi ad invitarmi con invito così largo." *Opere*, vol. xv. p. 94.

particularly to the lip; and this Countess of Scandiano is the second, out of the three Leonoras, with whom Tasso was said by his friend Manso to have been in love. The third, it is now ascertained, never existed; and his love-making to the new, or second Leonora, goes to shew how little of real passion there was in the praises of the first (the Princess Leonora), or probably of any lady at court. He even professed love, as a forlorn hope, to the countess's waiting-maid. Yet these gallantries of sonnets are exalted into bewilderments of the heart.

His restlessness returning, the poet now condescended to craft a second time. Expecting to meet with a refusal, and so to be afforded a pretext for quitting Ferrara, he applied for the vacant office of historiographer. It was granted him; and he then disgusted the Medici by pleading an unlooked-for engagement, which he could only reconcile to his applications for their favour by renouncing his claim to be believed. If he could have deceived others, why might he not have deceived them?

All the lurking weakness of the poet's temperament began to display itself at this juncture. His perplexity excited him to a degree of irritability bordering on delirium; and circumstances

conspired to increase it. He had lent an acquaintance the key of his rooms at court, for the purpose (he tells us) of accommodating some intrigue; and he suspected this person of opening cabinets containing his papers. Remonstrating with him one day in the court of the palace, either on that or some other account, the man gave him the lie. He received in return a blow on the face, and is said by Tasso to have brought a set of his kinsmen to assassinate him, all of whom the heroical poet immediately put to flight. At one time he suspected the duke of jealousy respecting the dedication of his poem, and at another, of a wish to burn it. He suspected his servants. He became suspicious of the truth of his friend Gonzaga. He doubted, even, whether some praises addressed to him by Orazio Ariosto, the nephew of the great poet, which, one would have thought, would have been to him a consummation of bliss, were not intended to mystify and hurt him. At length he fancied that his persecutors had accused him of heresy to the Inquisition; and, as he had gone through the metaphysical doubts, common with most men of reflection respecting points of faith and the mysteries of creation, he feared that some indiscreet words had escaped him, giving colour to the charge. He thus beheld enemies all around

him. He dreaded stabbing and poison; and one day, in some paroxysm of rage or horror, how occasioned it is not known, ran with a knife or dagger at one of the servants of the Duchess of Urbino in her own chamber.

Alfonso, upon this, apparently in the mildest and most reasonable manner, directed that he should be confined to his apartments, and put into the hands of the physician. These unfortunate events took place in the summer of 1577, and in the poet's thirty-third year.

Tasso shewed so much affliction at this treatment, and, at the same time, bore it so patiently, that the duke took him to his beautiful country-seat of Belriguardo; where, in one of his accounts of the matter, the poet says that he treated him as a brother; but in another, he accuses him of having taken pains to make him criminate himself, and confess certain matters, real or supposed, the nature of which is a puzzle with posterity. Some are of opinion (and this is the prevailing one), that he was found guilty of being in love with the Princess Leonora, perhaps of being loved by herself. Others think the love out of the question, and that the duke was concerned at nothing but his endeavouring to transfer his services and his poetic reputation into the hands of the Medici.

Others see in the duke's conduct nothing but that of a good master interesting himself in the welfare of an afflicted servant.

It is certain that Alfonso did all he could to prevent the surreptitious printing of the *Jerusalem Delivered* in various towns of Italy, the dread of which had much afflicted the poet; and he also endeavoured, though in vain, to ease his mind on the subject of the Inquisition; for these facts are attested by state-papers and other documents, not dependent either on the testimony of third persons or the partial representations of the sufferer. But Tasso felt so uneasy at Belriguardo, that he requested leave to retire a while into a convent. He remained there several days, apparently so much to his satisfaction, that he wrote to the duke to say that it was his intention to become a friar; and yet he had no sooner got into the place, than he addressed a letter to the Inquisition at Rome, beseeching it to desire permission for him to come to that city, in order to clear himself from the charges of his enemies. He also wrote to two other friends, requesting them to further his petition; and adding that the duke was enraged with him in consequence of the anger of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who, it is supposed, had accused Tasso of having re-

vealed to Alfonso some indecent epithet which his highness had applied to him.[1] These letters were undoubtedly intercepted, for they were found among the secret archives of Modena, the only principality ultimately remaining in the Este family; so that, agreeably to the saying of listeners hearing no good of themselves, if Alfonso did not know the epithet before, he learnt it then. The reader may conceive his feelings. Tasso, too, at the same time, was plaguing him with letters to similar purpose; and it is observable, that while in those which he sent to Rome he speaks of Cosmo de' Medici as "Grand Duke," he takes care in the others to call him simply the "Duke of Florence." Alfonso had been exasperated to the last degree at Cosmo's having had the epithet "Grand" added by the Pope to his ducal title; and the reader may imagine the little allowance that would be made by a haughty and angry

[1] The application is the conjecture of Black, vol. i. p. 317. Serassi suppressed the whole passage. The indecent word would have been known but for the delicacy or courtliness of Muratori, who substituted an *et-cetera* in its place, observing, that he had "covered" with it "an indecent word not fit to be printed" ("sotto quell' *et-cetera* ho io coperta un' indecente parola, che non era lecito di lasciar correre alle stampe." *Opere del Tasso*, vol. xvi. p. 114). By "covered" he seems to have meant blotted out; for in the latest edition of Tasso the *et-cetera* is retained.

prince for the rebellious courtesy thus shewn to a detested rival. Tasso, furthermore, who had not only an infantine hatred of bitter "physic," but reasonably thought the fashion of the age for giving it a ridiculous one, begged hard, in a manner which it is humiliating to witness, that he might not be drenched with medicine. The duke at length forbade his writing to him any more; and Tasso, whose fears of every kind of ill usage had been wound up to a pitch unbearable, watched an opportunity when he was carelessly guarded, and fled at once from the convent and Ferrara.

The unhappy poet selected the loneliest ways he could find, and directed his course to the kingdom of Naples, where his sister lived. He was afraid of pursuit; he probably had little money; and considering his ill health and his dread of the Inquisition, it is pitiable to think what he may have endured while picking his long way through the back states of the Church and over the mountains of Abruzzo, as far as the Gulf of Naples. For better security, he exchanged clothes with a shepherd; and as he feared even his sister at first, from doubting whether she still loved him, his interview with her was in all its circumstances painfully dramatic. Cornelia Tasso, now

a widow, with two sons, was still residing at Sorrento, where the poet, casting his eyes around him as he proceeded towards the house, must have beheld with singular feelings of wretchedness the lovely spots in which he had been a happy little boy. He did not announce himself at once. He brought letters, he said, from the lady's brother; and it is affecting to think, that whether his sister might or might not have retained otherwise any personal recollection of him since that time (for he had not seen her in the interval), his disguise was completed by the alterations which sorrow had made in his appearance. For, at all events, she did not know him. She saw in him nothing but a haggard stranger who was acquainted with the writer of the letters, and to whom they referred for particulars of the risk which her brother ran, unless she could afford him her protection. These particulars were given by the stranger with all the pathos of the real man, and the loving sister fainted away. On her recovery, the visitor said what he could to reassure her, and then by degrees discovered himself. Cornelia welcomed him in the tenderest manner. She did all that he desired; and gave out to her friends that the gentleman was a cousin from Bergamo, who had come to Naples on family affairs.

For a little while, the affection of his sister, and the beauty and freshness of Sorrento, rendered the mind of Tasso more easy: but his restlessness returned. He feared he had mortally offended the Duke of Ferrara; and, with his wonted fluctuation of purpose, he now wished to be restored to his presence for the very reason he had run away from it. He did not know with what vengeance he might be pursued. He wrote to the duke; but received no answer. The Duchess of Urbino was equally silent. Leonora alone responded, but with no encouragement. These appearances only made him the more anxious to dare or to propitiate his doom; and he accordingly determined to put himself in the duke's hands. His sister entreated him in vain to alter his resolution. He quitted her before the autumn was over; and, proceeding to Rome, went directly to the house of the duke's agent there, who, in concert with the Ferrarese ambassador, gave his master advice of the circumstance. Gonzaga, however, and another good friend, Cardinal Albano, doubted whether it would be wise in the poet to return to Ferrara under any circumstances. They counselled him to be satisfied with being pardoned at a distance, and with having his papers and other things returned to him; and the two

friends immediately wrote to the duke requesting as much. The duke apparently acquiesced in all that was desired; but he said that the illness of his sister, the Duchess of Urbino, delayed the procuration of the papers, which, it seems, were chiefly in her hands. The upshot was, that the papers did not come; and Tasso, with a mixture of rage and fear, and perhaps for more reasons than he has told, became uncontrollably desirous of retracing the rest of his steps to Ferrara. Love may have been among these reasons—probably was; though it does not follow that the passion must have been for a princess. The poet now, therefore, petitioned to that effect; and Alfonso wrote again, and said he might come, but only on condition of his again undergoing the ducal course of medicine; adding, that if he did not, he was to be finally expelled his highness's territories.

He was graciously received—too graciously, it would seem, for his equanimity; for it gave him such a flow of spirits, that the duke appears to have thought it necessary to repress them. The unhappy poet, at this, began to have some of his old suspicions; and the unaccountable detention of his papers confirmed them. He made an effort to keep the suspicions down, but it was by means, unfortunately, of drowning them in wine and jol-

lity; and this gave him such a fit of sickness as had nearly been his death. He recovered, only to make a fresh stir about his papers, and a still greater one about his poems in general, which, though his *Jerusalem* was yet only known in manuscript, and not even his *Aminta* published, he believed ought to occupy the attention of mankind. People at Ferrara, therefore, not foreseeing the respect that posterity would entertain for the poet, and having no great desire perhaps to encourage a man who claimed to be a rival of their countryman Ariosto, now began to consider their Neapolitan guest not merely an ingenious and pitiable, but an overweening and tiresome enthusiast. The court, however, still seemed to be interested in its panegyrist, though Tasso feared that Alfonso meant to burn his *Jerusalem*. Alfonso, on the other hand, is supposed to have feared that he would burn it himself, and the ducal praises with it. The papers, at all events, apparently including the only fair copy of the poem, were constantly withheld; and Tasso, in a new fit of despair, again quitted Ferrara. This mystery of the papers is certainly very extraordinary.

The poet's first steps were to Mantua, where he met with no such reception as encouraged him to stay. He then went to Urbino, but did not

stop long. The prince, it is true, was very gracious; and bandages for a cautery were applied by the fair hands of his highness's sister; but, though the nurse enchanted, the surgery frightened him. The hapless poet found himself pursued wherever he went by the tormenting beneficence of medicine. He escaped, and went to Turin. He had no passport; and presented, besides, so miserable an appearance, that the people at the gates roughly refused him admittance. He was well received, however, at court; and as he had begun to acknowledge that he was subject to humours and delusions, and wrote to say as much to Cardinal Albano, who returned him a most excellent and affecting letter, full of the kindest regard and good counsel, his friends entertained a hope that he would become tranquil. But he disappointed them. He again applied to Alfonso for permission to return to Ferrara—again received it, though on worse than the old conditions—and again found himself in that city in the beginning of the year 1579, delighted at seeing a brilliant assemblage from all quarters of Italy on occasion of a new marriage of the duke's (with a princess of Mantua). He made up his mind to think that nothing could be denied him, at such a moment, by the bridegroom whom he meant to honour and glorify.

Alas! the very circumstance to which he looked for success, tended to throw him into the greatest of his calamities. Alfonso was to be married the day after the poet's arrival. He was therefore too busy to attend to him. The princesses did not attend to him. Nobody attended to him. He again applied in vain for his papers. He regretted his return; became anxious to be any where else; thought himself not only neglected but derided; and at length became excited to a pitch of frenzy. He broke forth into the most unmeasured invectives against the duke, even in public; invoked curses on his head and that of his whole race; retracted all he had ever said in the praise of any of them, prince or otherwise; and pronounced him and his whole court "a parcel of ingrates, rascals, and poltroons."[1] The outbreak was reported to the duke; and the consequence was, that the poet was sent to the hospital of St. Anne, an establishment for the reception of the poor and lunatic, where he remained (with the exception of a few unaccountable leave-days) upwards of seven years. This melancholy event happened in the March of the year 1579.

[1] Black's version (vol. ii. p. 58) is not strong enough. The words in Serassi are "una ciurma di poltroni, ingrati, e ribaldi." ii. p. 33.

Tasso was stunned by this blow as much as if he had never done or suffered any thing to expect it. He could at first do nothing but wonder and bewail himself, and implore to be set free. The duke answered, that he must be cured first. Tasso replied by fresh entreaties; the duke returned the same answers. The unhappy poet had recourse to every friend, prince, and great man he could think of, to join his entreaties; he sought refuge in composition, but still entreated; he occasionally reproached and even bantered the duke in some of his letters to his friends, all of which, doubtless, were opened; but still he entreated, flattered, adored, all to no purpose, for seven long years and upwards. In time he became subject to maniacal illusions; so that if he was not actually mad before, he was now considered so. He was not only visited with sights and sounds, such as many people have experienced whose brains have been over-excited, but he fancied himself haunted by a sprite, and become the sport of "magicians." The sprite stole his things, and the magicians would not let him get well. He had a vision such as Benvenuto Cellini had, of the Virgin Mary in her glory; and his nights were so miserable, that he ate too much in order that he might sleep. When

he was temperate, he lay awake. Sometimes he felt "as if a horse had thrown himself on him." "Have pity on me," he says to the friend to whom he gives these affecting accounts; "I am miserable, because the world is unjust."[1]

The physicians advised him to leave off wine; but he says he could not do that, though he was content to use it in moderation. In truth he required something to support him against the physicians themselves, for they continued to exhaust his strength by their medicines, and could not supply the want of it with air and freedom. He had ringings in the ears, vomits, and fluxes of blood. It would be ludicrous, if it were not deplorably pathetic, to hear so great a man, in the commonest medical terms, now protesting against the eternal drenches of these practitioners, now humbly submitting to them, and now entreating like a child, that they might at least not be "so bitter." The physicians, with the duke at their head, were as mad for their rhubarbs and lancets as the quacks in Molière; and nothing but the very imagination that had nearly sacrificed the poet's life to their ignorance could have hindered him from dashing his head against the

[1] *Opere*, vol. xiv. pp. 158, 174, &c.

wall, and leaving them to the execrations of posterity. It is the only occasion in which the noble profession of medicine has not appeared in wise and beneficent connexion with the sufferings of men of letters. Why did Ferrara possess no Brocklesby in those days? no Garth, Mead, Warren, or Southwood Smith?

Tasso enabled himself to endure his imprisonment with composition. He supported it with his poetry and his poem, and what, alas! he had been too proud of during his liberty, the praises of his admirers. His genius brought him gifts from princes, and some money from the booksellers: it supported him even against his critics. During his confinement the *Jerusalem Delivered* was first published; though, to his grief, from a surreptitious and mutilated copy. But it was followed by a storm of applause; and if this was succeeded by as great a storm of objection and controversy, still the healthier part of his faculties were roused, and he exasperated his critics and astonished the world by shewing how coolly and learnedly the poor, wild, imprisoned genius could discuss the most intricate questions of poetry and philosophy. The disputes excited by his poem are generally supposed to have done him harm; but the conclusion appears to be ill founded. They diverted his

thoughts, and made him conscious of his powers and his fame. I doubt whether he would have been better for entire approbation: it would have put him in a state of elevation, unfit for what he had to endure. He had found his pen his great solace, and he had never employed it so well. It would be incredible what a heap of things he wrote in this complicated torment of imprisonment, sickness, and "physic," if habit and mental activity had not been sufficient to account for much greater wonders. His letters to his friends and others would make a good-sized volume; those to his critics, another; sonnets and odes, a third; and his Dialogues after the manner of Plato, two more. Perhaps a good half of all he wrote was written in this hospital of St. Anne; and he studied as well as composed, and had to read all that was written at the time, *pro* and *con*, in the discussions about his *Jerusalem*, which, in the latest edition of his works, amount to three out of six volumes octavo! Many of the occasions, however, of his poems, as well as letters, are most painful to think of, their object having been to exchange praise for money. And it is distressing, in the letters, to see his other little wants, and the fluctuations and moods of his mind. Now he is angry about some book not restored, or some gift promised and delayed. Now

he is in want of some books to be lent him; now of some praise to comfort him; now of a little fresh linen. He is very thankful for visits, for respectful letters, for "sweetmeats;" and greatly puzzled to know what to do with the bad sonnets and panegyrics that are sent him. They were sometimes too much even for the allowed ultra courtesies of Italian acknowledgment. His compliments to most people are varied with astonishing grace and ingenuity; his accounts of his condition often sufficient to bring the tears into the manliest eyes; and his ceaseless and vain efforts to procure his liberation mortifying when we think of himself, and exasperating when we think of the petty despot who detained him in so long, so degrading, and so worse than useless a confinement.

Tasso could not always conceal his contempt of his imprisoner from the ducal servants. Alfonso excelled the grandiloquent poet himself in his love of pomp and worship; and as he had no particular merits to warrant it, his victim bantered his love of titles. He says, in a letter to the duke's steward, "If it is the pleasure of the Most Serene Signor Duke, Most Clement and Most Invincible, to keep me in prison, may I beg that he will have the goodness to return certain little things of mine, which his Most Invincible, Most Clement,

and Most Serene Highness has so often promised me."[1]

But these were rare ebullitions of gaiety, perhaps rather of bitter despair. A playful address to a cat to lend him her eyes to write by, during some hour in which he happened to be without a light (for it does not appear to have been denied him), may be taken as more probable evidence of a mind relieved at the moment, though the necessity for the relief may have been very sad. But the style in which he generally alludes to his situation is far different. He continually begs his correspondents to pity him, to pray for him, to attribute his errors to infirmity. He complains of impaired memory, and acknowledges that he has become subject to the deliriums formerly attributed to him by the enemies that had helped to produce them. Petitioning the native city of his ancestors (Bergamo) to intercede for him with the duke, he speaks of the writer as "this unhappy person;" and subscribes himself,—

"Most illustrious Signors, your affectionate

[1] "Prego V. Signoria che si contenti, se piace al Serenissimo Signor Duca, Clementissimo ed Invitissimo, che io stia in prigione, di farmi dar le poche robicciole mie, che S. A. Invitissima, Clementissima, Serenissima m' ha promesse tante volte," &c. *Opere*, vol. xiv. p. 6.

servant, Torquato Tasso, a prisoner, and infirm, in the hospital of St. Anne in Ferrara."

In one of his addresses to Alfonso, he says most affectingly:

"I have sometimes attributed much to myself, and considered myself as somebody. But now, seeing in how many ways imagination has imposed on me, I suspect that it has also deceived me in this opinion of my own consequence. Indeed, methinks the past has been a dream; and hence I am resolved to rely on my imagination no longer."

Alfonso made no answer.

The causes of Tasso's imprisonment, and its long duration, are among the puzzles of biography. The prevailing opinion, notwithstanding the opposition made to it by Serassi and Black, is, that the poet made love to the Princess Leonora—perhaps was beloved by her; and that her brother the duke punished him for his arrogance. This was the belief of his earliest biographer, Manso, who was intimately acquainted with the poet in his latter days; and from Manso (though he did not profess to receive the information from Tasso, but only to gather it from his poems) it spread over all Europe. Milton took it on trust from him;[1] and so have our English translators Hoole and Wiffen. The Abbé

[1] "Altera Torquatum cepit Leonora poetam," &c.

de Charnes, however, declined to do so;[1] and Montaigne, who saw the poet in St. Anne's hospital, says nothing of the love at all. He attributes his condition to poetical excitement, hard study, and the meeting of the extremes of wisdom and folly. The philosopher, however, speaks of the poet's having survived his reason, and become unconscious both of himself and his works, which the reader knows to be untrue. He does not appear to have conversed with Tasso. The poet was only shewn him; probably at a sick moment, or by a new and ignorant official.[2] Muratori, who was in the service of the Este family at Modena, tells us, on the authority of an old acquaintance who knew contemporaries of Tasso, that the "good Torquato" finding himself one day in company with the duke and his sister, and going close to the princess in order to answer some question which she had put to him, was so transported by an impulse "more than poetical," as to give her a kiss; upon which the duke, who had observed it, turned about to his gentlemen, and said, "What a pity to see so great a man distracted!" and so ordered him to be locked up.[3] But this writer adds, that he does

[1] *Vie du Tasse*, 1695, p. 51.

[2] In the *Apology for Raimond de Sebonde;* Essays, vol. ii. ch. 12.

[3] In his *Letter to Zeno,—Opere del Tasso*, xvi. p. 118.

not know what to think of the anecdote: he neither denies nor admits it. Tiraboschi, who was also in the service of the Este family, doubts the truth of the anecdote, and believes that the duke shut the poet up solely for fear lest his violence should do harm.[1] Serassi, the second biographer of Tasso, who dedicated his book to an Este princess inimical to the poet's memory, attributes the confinement, on his own shewing, to the violent words he had uttered against his master.[2] Walker, the author of the *Memoir on Italian Tragedy*, says, that the life by Serassi himself induced him to credit the love-story:[3] so does Ginguéné.[4] Black, forgetting the age and illnesses of hundreds of enamoured ladies, and the distraction of lovers at all times, derides the notion of passion on either side; because, he argues, Tasso was subject to frenzies, and Leonora forty-two years of age, and

[1] *Storia della Poesia Italiana* (Mathias's edition), vol. iii. part i. p 236.

[2] Serassi is very peremptory, and even abusive. He charges every body who has said any thing to the contrary with imposture. "Egli non v' ha dubbio, che le troppe imprudenti e temerarie parole, che il Tasso si lasciò uscir di bocca in questo incontro, furone la sola cagione della sua prigionia, e ch' è mera favola ed *impostura* tutto ciò, che diversamente è stato affermato e scritto da altri in tale proposito." Vol. ii. p. 33. But we have seen that the good Abbé could practise a little imposition himself.

[3] Black, ii. 88. [4] *Hist. Litt. d'Italie*, v. 243, &c.

not in good health.[1] What would Madame d'Houdetot have said to him? or Mademoiselle L'Espinasse? or Mrs. Inchbald, who used to walk up and down Sackville Street in order that she might see Dr. Warren's light in his window? Foscolo was a believer in the love;[2] Sismondi admits it;[3] and Rosini, the editor of the latest edition of the poet's works, is passionate for it. He wonders how any body can fail to discern it in a number of passages, which, in truth, may mean a variety of other loves; and he insists much upon certain loose verses (*lascivi*) which the poet, among his various accounts of the origin of his imprisonment, assigns as the cause, or one of the causes, of it.[4]

[1] Vol. ii. p. 89.

[2] Such at least is my impression; but I cannot call the evidence to mind.

[3] *Literature of the South of Europe* (Roscoe's translation), vol. ii. p. 165. To shew the loose way in which the conclusions of a man's own mind are presented as facts admitted by others, Sismondi says, that Tasso's "passion" was the cause of his return to Ferrara. There is not a tittle of evidence to shew for it.

[4] *Saggio sugli Amori*, &c. ut sup. p. 84, and passim. As specimens of the learned professor's reasoning, it may be observed that whenever the words *humble*, *daring*, *high*, *noble*, and *royal*, occur in the poet's love-verses, he thinks they *must* allude to the Princess Leonora; and he argues, that Alfonso never could have been so angry with any "versi lascivi," if they had not had the same direction.

I confess, after a reasonable amount of inquiry into this subject, that I can find no proofs whatsoever of Tasso's having made love to Leonora; though I think it highly probable. I believe the main cause of the duke's proceedings was the poet's own violence of behaviour and incontinence of speech. I think it very likely that, in the course of the poetical love-making to various ladies, which was almost identical in that age with addressing them in verse, Torquato, whether he was in love or not, took more liberties with the princesses than Alfonso approved; and it is equally probable, that one of those liberties consisted in his indulging his imagination too far. It is not even impossible, that more gallantry may have been going on at court than Alfonso could endure to see alluded to, especially by an ambitious pen. But there is no evidence that such was the case. Tasso, as a gentleman, could not have hinted at such a thing on the part of a princess of staid reputation; and, on the other hand, the "love" he speaks of as entertained by her for him, and warranting the application to her for money in case of his death, was too plainly worded to mean any thing but love in the sense of friendly regard. "Per amor mio" is an idiomatical expression, meaning "for my sake;" a strong one, no doubt,

and such as a proud man like Alfonso might think a liberty, but not at all of necessity an amatory boast. If it was, its very effrontery and vanity were presumptions of its falsehood. The lady whom Tasso alludes to in the passage quoted on his first confinement is complained of for her coldness towards him; and, unless this was itself a gentlemanly blind, it might apply to fifty other ladies besides the princess. The man who assaulted him in the streets, and who is supposed to have been the violator of his papers, need not have found any secrets of love in them. The servant at whom he aimed the knife or the dagger might be as little connected with such matters; and the sonnets which the poet said he wrote for a friend, and which he desired to be buried with him, might be alike innocent of all reference to Leonora, whether he wrote them for a friend or not. Leonora's death took place during the poet's confinement; and, lamented as she was by the verse-writers according to custom, Tasso wrote nothing on the event. This silence has been attributed to the depth of his passion; but how is the fact proved? and why may it not have been occasioned by there having been no passion at all?

All that appears certain is, that Tasso spoke

violent and contemptuous words against the duke; that he often spoke ill of him in his letters; that he endeavoured, not with perfect ingenuousness, to exchange his service for that of another prince; that he asserted his madness to have been pretended in the first instance purely to gratify the duke's whim for thinking it so (which was one of the reasons perhaps why Alfonso, as he complained, would not believe a word he said); and finally, that, whether the madness was or was not so pretended, it unfortunately became a confirmed though milder form of mania, during a long confinement. Alfonso, too proud to forgive the poet's contempt, continued thus to detain him, partly perhaps because he was not sorry to have a pretext for revenge, partly because he did not know what to do with him, consistently either with his own or the poet's safety. He had not been generous enough to put Tasso above his wants; he had not address enough to secure his respect; he had not merit enough to overlook his reproaches. If Tasso had been as great a man as he was a poet, Alfonso would not have been reduced to these perplexities. The poet would have known how to settle quietly down on his small court-income, and wait patiently in the midst of his beautiful visions for what fortune had or had

not in store for him. But in truth, he, as well as the duke, was weak; they made a bad business of it between them; and Alfonso the Second closed the accounts of the Este family with the Muses, by keeping his panegyrist seven years in a mad-house, to the astonishment of posterity, and the destruction of his own claims to renown.

It does not appear that Tasso was confined in any such dungeon as they now exhibit in Ferrara. The conduct of the Prior of the Hospital is more doubtful. His name was Agostino Mosti; and, strangely enough, he was the person who had raised a monument to Ariosto, of whom he was an enthusiastic admirer. To this predilection has been attributed his alleged cruelty to the stranger from Sorrento, who dared to emulate the fame of his idol;—an extraordinary, though perhaps not incredible, mode of shewing a critic's regard for poetry. But Tasso, while he laments his severity, wonders at it in a man so well bred and so imbued with literature, and thinks it can only have originated in "orders."[1] Perhaps there were faults of temper on both sides; and Mosti, not liking his office, forgot the allowance to be made for that of a prisoner and sick man. His nephew,

[1] *Opere*, vol. xvii. p. 32.

Giulio Mosti, became strongly attached to the poet, and was a great comfort to him.

At length the time for liberation arrived. In the summer of 1586, Don Vincenzo Gonzaga, Prince of Mantua, kinsman of the poet's friend Scipio, came to Ferrara for the purpose of complimenting Alfonso's heir on his nuptials. The whole court of Mantua, with hereditary regard for Tasso, whose father had been one of their ornaments, were desirous of having him among them; and the prince extorted Alfonso's permission to take him away, on condition (so hard did he find this late concession to humanity, and so fearful was he of losing the dignity of jailor) that his deliverer should not allow him to quit Mantua without obtaining leave. A young and dear friend, his most frequent visitor, Antonio Constantini, secretary to the Tuscan ambassador, went to St. Anne's to prepare the captive by degrees for the good news. He told him that he really might look for his release in the course of a few days. The sensitive poet, now a premature old man of forty-two, was thrown into a transport of mingled delight and anxiety. He had been disappointed so often that he could scarcely believe his good fortune. In a day or two he writes thus to his visitor:

"Your kindness, my dear friend, has so accus-

tomed me to your precious and frequent visits, that I have been all day long at the window expecting your coming to comfort me as you are wont. But since you have not yet arrived, and in order not to remain altogether without consolation, I visit you with this letter. It encloses a sonnet to the ambassador, written with a trembling hand, and in such a manner that he will not, perhaps, have less difficulty in reading it than I had in writing."

Two days afterwards, the prince himself came again, requested of the poet some verses on a given subject, expressed his esteem for his genius and virtues, and told him that, on his return to Mantua, he should have the pleasure of conducting him to that city. Tasso lay awake almost all night, composing the verses; and next day enclosed them, with a letter, in another to Constantini, ardently begging him to keep the prince in mind of his promise. The prince had not forgotten it; and two or three days afterwards, the order for the release arrived, and Tasso quitted his prison. He had been confined seven years, two months, and several days. He awaited the prince's departure for a week or two in his friend's abode, paying no visits, probably from inability to endure so much novelty. Neither was he in-

clined or sent for to pay his respects to the duke. Two such parties could hardly have been desirous to look on each other. The duke must especially have disliked the thought of it; though Tasso afterwards fancied otherwise, and that he was offended at his non-appearance. But his letters, unfortunately, differ with themselves on this point, as on most others. About the middle of July 1586, the poet quitted Ferrara for ever.

At Mantua Tasso was greeted with all the honours and attentions which his love of distinction could desire. The good old duke, the friend of his father, ordered handsome apartments to be provided for him in the palace; the prince made him presents of costly attire, including perfumed silken hose (kindred elegancies to the Italian gloves of Queen Elizabeth); the princess and her mother-in-law were declared admirers of his poetry; the courtiers caressed the favourite of their masters; Tasso found literary society; he pronounced the very bread and fruit, the fish and the flesh, excellent; the wines were sharp and brisk ("such as his father was fond of"); and even the physician was admirable, for he ordered confections. One might imagine, if circumstances had not proved the cordial nature of the Gonzaga family, and the real respect and admiration

entertained for the poet's genius by the greatest men of the time, in spite of the rebuke it had received from Alfonso, that there had been a confederacy to mock and mystify him, after the fashion of the duke and duchess with Don Quixote (the only blot, by the way, in the book of Cervantes; if, indeed, he did not intend it as a satire on the mystifiers).

For a while, in short, the liberated prisoner thought himself happy. He corrected his prose works, resumed and finished the tragedy of *Torrismond*, which he had begun some years before, corresponded with princes, and completed and published a narrative poem left unfinished by his father. Torquato was as loving a son as Mozart or Montaigne. Whenever he had a glimpse of felicity, he appears to have associated the idea of it with that of his father. In the conclusion of his fragment, "O del grand' Apennino," he affectingly begs pardon of his blessed spirit for troubling him with his earthly griefs.[1]

But, alas, what had been an indulgence of self-esteem had now become the habit of a dis-

[1] "Padre, o buon padre, che dal ciel rimiri,
Egro e morto ti piansi, e ben tu il sai;
E gemendo scaldai
La tomba e il letto. Or che negli altri giri

ease; and in the course of a few months the restless poet began to make his old discovery, that he was not sufficiently cared for. The prince had no leisure to attend to him; the nobility did not "yield him the first place," or at least (he adds) they did not allow him to be treated "externally as their equal;" and he candidly confessed that he could not live in a place where such was the custom.[1] He felt also, naturally enough, however well it might have been intended, that it was not pleasant to be confined to the range of the city of Mantua, attended by a servant, even though he confessed that he was now subject to "frenzy." He contrived to stay another half-year by help of a brilliant carnival and of

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Tu godi, a te si deve onor, non lutto:
A me versato il mio dolor sia tutto."

O father, my good father, looking now
On thy poor son from heaven, well knowest thou
What scalding tears I shed
Upon thy grave, upon thy dying bed;
But since thou dwellest in the happy skies,
'Tis fit I raise to thee no sorrowing eyes:
Be all my grief on my own head.

[1] "Non posso viver in città, ove tutti i nobili, o non mi concedano i primi luoghi, o almeno non si contentino che la cosa in quel che appartiene a queste esteriori dimostrazioni, vada del pari." *Opere*, vol. xiii. p. 153.

the select society of the prince's court, who were evidently most kind to him; but at the end of the twelvemonth he was in Bergamo among his relations. The prince gave him leave to go; and the Cavaliere Tasso, his kinsman, sent his chariot on purpose to fetch him.

Here again he found himself at a beautiful country-seat, which the family of Tasso still possesses near that city; and here again, in the house of his father, he proposed to be happy, "having never desired," he says, "any journey more earnestly than this." He left it in the course of a month, to return to Mantua.

And it was only to wander still. Mantua he quitted in less than two months to go to Rome, in spite of the advice of his best friends. He vindicated the proceeding by a hope of obtaining some permanent settlement from the Pope. He took Loretto by the way, to refresh himself with devotion; arrived in a transport at Rome; got nothing from the Pope (the hard-minded Sixtus the Fifth); and in the spring of the next year, in the triple hope of again embracing his sister, and recovering the dowry of his mother and the confiscated property of his father, he proceeded to Naples.

Naples was in its most beautiful vernal con-

dition, and the Neapolitans welcomed the poet with all honour and glory; but his sister, alas, was dead; he got none of his father's property, nor (till too late) any of his mother's; and before the year was out, he was again in Rome. He acquired in Naples, however, another friend, as attached to him and as constant in his attentions as his beloved Constantini, to wit, Giambattista Manso, Marquis of Villa, who became his biographer, and who was visited and praised for his good offices by Milton. In the society of this gentleman he seemed for a short while to have become a new man. He entered into field-sports, listened to songs and music, nay, danced, says Manso, with "the girls." (One fancies a poetical Dr. Johnson with the two country damsels on his knees.) In short, good air and freedom, and no medicine, had conspired with the lessons of disappointment to give him, before he died, a glimpse of the power to be pleased. He had not got rid of all his spiritual illusions, even those of a melancholy nature; but he took the latter more quietly, and had grown so comfortable with the race in general, that he encouraged them. He was so entirely freed from his fears of the Inquisition and of charges of magic, that whereas he had formerly been anxious to shew that he meant nothing but a

poetical fancy by the spirit which he introduced as communing with him in his dialogue entitled the *Messenger*, he now maintained its reality against the arguments of his friend Manso; and these arguments gave rise to the most poetical scene in his history. He told Manso that he should have ocular testimony of the spirit's existence; and accordingly one day while they were sitting together at the marquis's fireside, "he turned his eyes," says Manso, "towards a window, and held them a long time so intensely on it, that, when I called him, he did not answer. At last, 'Behold,' said he, 'the friendly spirit which has courteously come to talk with me. Lift up your eyes, and see the truth.' I turned my eyes thither immediately (continues the marquis); but though I endeavoured to look as keenly as I could, I beheld nothing but the rays of the sun, which streamed through the panes of the window into the chamber. Whilst I still looked around, without beholding any object, Torquato began to hold, with this unknown something, a most lofty converse. I heard, indeed, and saw nothing but himself; nevertheless his words, at one time questioning, at another replying, were such as take place between those who reason strictly on some important subject. And from what was said by the one,

the reply of the other might be easily comprehended by the intellect, although it was not heard by the ear. The discourses were so lofty and marvellous, both by the sublimity of their topics and a certain unwonted manner of talking, that, exalted above myself in a kind of ecstasy, I did not dare to interrupt them, nor ask Tasso about the spirit, which he had announced to me, but which I did not see. In this way, while I listened between stupefaction and rapture, a considerable time had elapsed; till at last the spirit departed, as I learned from the words of Torquato; who, turning to me, said, 'From this day forward all your doubts will have vanished from your mind.' 'Nay,' said I, 'they are rather increased; since, though I have heard many things worthy of marvel, I have seen nothing of what you promised to shew me to dispel them.' He smiled, and said, 'You have seen and heard more of him than perhaps ——,' and here he paused. Fearful of importuning him with new questions, the discourse ended; and the only conclusion I can draw is, what I before said, that it is more likely his visions or frenzies will disorder my own mind than that I shall extirpate his true or imaginary opinion."[1]

[1] Black, vol. ii. p. 240.

Did the "smile" of Tasso at the close of this extraordinary scene, and the words which he omitted to add, signify that his friend had seen and heard more, perhaps, than the poet *would have liked* to explain? Did he mean that he himself alone had been seen and heard, and was author of the whole dialogue? Perhaps he did; for credulity itself can impose;—can take pleasure in seeing others as credulous as itself. On the other hand, enough has become known in our days of the phenomena of morbid perception, to render Tasso's actual belief in such visions not at all surprising. It is not uncommon for the sanest people of delicate organisation to see faces before them while going to sleep, sometimes in fantastical succession. A stronger exercise of this disposition in temperaments more delicate will enlarge the face to figure; and there can be no question that an imagination so heated as Tasso's, so full of the speculations of the later Platonists, and accompanied by a state of body so "nervous," and a will so bent on its fancies, might embody whatever he chose to behold. The dialogue he could as easily read in the vision's looks, whether he heard it or not with ears. If Nicholay, the Prussian bookseller, who saw crowds of spiritual people go through his rooms, had been a poet, and possessed of as

wilful an imagination as Tasso, he might have gifted them all with *speaking countenances* as easily as with coats and waistcoats. Swedenborg founded a religion on this morbid faculty; and the Catholics worship a hundred stories of the like sort in the Lives of the Saints, many of which are equally true and false; false in reality, though true in supposition. Luther himself wrote and studied till he saw the Devil; only the great reformer retained enough of his naturally sturdy health and judgment to throw an inkstand at Satan's head,—a thing that philosophy has been doing ever since.

Tasso's principal residence while at Naples had been in the beautiful monastery of Mount Olivet, on which the good monks begged he would write them a poem; which he did. A cold reception at Rome, and perhaps the difference of the air, brought back his old lamentations; but here again a monastery gave him refuge, and he set himself down to correct his former works and compose new ones. He missed, however, the comforts of society and amusement which he had experienced at Naples. Nevertheless, he did not return thither. He persuaded himself that it was necessary to be in Rome in order to expedite the receipt of some books and manuscripts from Bergamo and

other places; but his restlessness desired novelty. He thus slipped back from the neighbourhood of Rome to the city itself, and from the city back to the monastery, his friends in both places being probably tired of his instability. He thought of returning to Mantua; but a present from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, accompanied by an invitation to his court, drew him, in one of his short-lived transports, to Florence. He returned, in spite of the best and most generous reception, to Rome; then left Rome for Mantua, on invitation from his ever-kind deliverer from prison, now the reigning duke; tired again, even of him; returned to Rome; then once more to Naples, where the Prince of Conca, Grand Admiral of the kingdom, lodged and treated him like an equal; but he grew suspicious of the admiral, and went to live with his friend Manso; quitted Manso for Rome again; was treated with reverence on the way, like Ariosto, by a famous leader of banditti; was received at Rome into the Vatican itself, in the apartments of his friend Cintio Aldobrandino, nephew of the new pope Clement the Eighth, where his hopes now seemed to be raised at once to their highest and most reasonable pitch; but fell ill, and was obliged to go back to Naples for the benefit of the air. A life so strangely erratic

to the last (for mortal illness was approaching) is perhaps unique in the history of men of letters, and might be therefore worth recording even in that of a less man than Tasso; but when we recollect that this poet, in spite of all his weaknesses, and notwithstanding the enemies they provoked and the friends they cooled, was really almost adored for his genius in his own time, and instead of refusing jewels one day and soliciting a ducat the next, might have settled down almost any where in quiet and glory, if he had but possessed the patience to do so,—it becomes an association of weakness with power, and of adversity with the means of prosperity, the absurdity of which admiration itself can only drown in pity.

He now took up his abode in another monastery, that of San Severino, where he was comforted by the visits of his friend Manso, to whom he had lately inscribed a dialogue on *Friendship;* for he continued writing to the last. He had also the consolation, such as it was, of having the lawsuit for his mother's dowry settled in his favour, though under circumstances that rendered it of little importance, and only three months before his death. So strangely did Fortune seem to take delight in sporting with a man of genius, who had

thought both too much of her and too little; too much for pomp's sake, and too little in prudence. Among his new acquaintances were the young Marino, afterwards the corrupter of Italian poetry, and the Prince of Venosa, an amateur composer of music. The dying poet wrote madrigals for him so much to his satisfaction, that, being about to marry into the house of Este, he wished to reconcile him with the Duke of Ferrara; and Tasso, who to the last moment of his life seems never to have been able to resist the chance of resuming old quarters, apparently from the double temptation of renouncing them, wrote his old master a letter full of respects and regrets. But the duke, who himself died in the course of the year, was not to be moved from his silence. The poet had given him the last possible offence by recasting his *Jerusalem*, omitting the glories of the house of Este, and dedicating it to another patron. Alfonso, who had been extravagantly magnificent, though not to poets, had so weakened his government, that the Pope wrested Ferrara from the hands of his successor, and reduced the Este family to the possession of Modena, which it still holds and dishonours. The duke and the poet were thus fading away at the same time; they never met again in this world; and a

new Dante would have divided them far enough in the next.[1]

The last glimpse of honour and glory was now opening in a very grand manner on the poet — the last and the greatest, as if on purpose to give the climax to his disappointments. Cardinal Cintio requested the Pope to give him the honour of a coronation. It had been desired by the poet, it seems, three years before. He was disappointed of it at that time; and now that it was granted, he was disappointed of the ceremony. Manso says he no longer cared for it; and, as he felt himself dying, this is not improbable. Nevertheless he went to Rome for the purpose; and though the severity of the winter there delayed the intention till spring, wealth and honours seemed determined to come in floods upon the poor expiring great man, in order to take away the breath which they had refused to support. The Pope assigned him a yearly pension of a hundred scudi; and the withholders of his mother's dowry came to an accommodation by which he

[1] The world in general have taken no notice of Tasso's reconstruction of his *Jerusalem*, which he called the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*. It never "obtained," as the phrase is. It was the mere tribute of his declining years to bigotry and new acquaintances; and therefore I say no more of it.

was to have an annuity of a hundred ducats, and a considerable sum in hand. His hand was losing strength enough to close upon the money. Scarcely was the day for the coronation about to dawn, when the poet felt his dissolution approaching. Alfonso's doctors had killed him at last by superinducing a habit of medicine-taking, which defeated its purpose. He requested leave to return to the monastery of St. Onofrio—wrote a farewell letter to Constantini—received the distinguished honour of a plenary indulgence from the Pope—said (in terms very like what Milton might have used, had he died a Catholic), that "this was the chariot upon which he hoped to go crowned, not with laurel as a poet into the capitol, but with glory as a saint to heaven"—and expired on the 25th of April, 1575, and the fifty-first year of his age, closely embracing the crucifix, and imperfectly uttering the sentence beginning, "Into thy hands, O Lord!"[1]

Even after death, success mocked him; for the coronation took place on the senseless dead body. The head was wreathed with laurel; a magnificent toga delayed for a while the shroud; and a procession took place through the city by

[1] *In manus tuas, Domine.* One likes to know the actual words; at least so it appears to me.

torchlight, all the inhabitants pouring forth to behold it, and painters crowding over the bier to gaze on the poet's lineaments, from which they produced a multitude of portraits. The corpse was then buried in the church of St. Onofrio; and magnificent monuments talked of, which never appeared. Manso, however, obtained leave to set up a modest tablet; and eight years afterwards a Ferrarese cardinal (Bevilacqua) made what amends he could for his countrymen, by erecting the stately memorial which is still to be seen.

Poor, illustrious Tasso! weak enough to warrant pity from his inferiors—great enough to overshadow in death his once-fancied superiors. He has been a by-word for the misfortunes of genius: but genius was not his misfortune; it was his only good, and might have brought him all happiness. It is the want of genius, as far as it goes, and apart from martyrdoms for conscience' sake, which produces misfortunes even to genius itself—the want of as much wit and balance on the common side of things, as genius is supposed to confine to the uncommon.

Manso has left a minute account of his friend's person and manners. He was tall even among the tall; had a pale complexion, sunken cheeks, lightish brown hair, head bald at the top, large

blue eyes, square forehead, big nose inclining towards the mouth, lips pale and thin, white teeth, delicate white hands, long arms, broad chest and shoulders, legs rather strong than fleshy, and the body altogether better proportioned than in good condition; the result, nevertheless, being an aspect of manly beauty and expression, particularly in the countenance, the dignity of which marked him for an extraordinary person even to those who did not know him. His demeanour was grave and deliberate; he laughed seldom; and though his tongue was prompt, his delivery was slow; and he was accustomed to repeat his last words. He was expert in all manly exercises, but not equally graceful; and the same defect attended his otherwise striking eloquence in public assemblies. His putting to flight the assassins in Ferrara gave him such a reputation for courage, that there went about in his honour a popular couplet:

> "Colla penna e colla spada
> Nessun val quanto Torquato."
>
> For the sword as well as pen
> Tasso is the man of men.

He was a little eater, but not averse to wine, particularly such as combined piquancy with sweetness; and he always dressed in black.

Manso's account is still more particular, and yet it does not tell all; for Tasso himself informs us that he stammered, and was near-sighted;[1] and a Neapolitan writer who knew him adds to the near-sightedness some visible defect in the eyes.[2] I should doubt, from what Tasso says in his letters, whether he was fond of speaking in public, notwithstanding his *début* in that line with the *Fifty Amorous Conclusions*. Nor does he appear to have been remarkable for his conversation. Manso has left a collection of one hundred of his pithy sayings—a suspicious amount, and unfortunately more than warranting the suspicion; for almost every one of them is traceable to some other man. They come from the Greek and Latin philosophers, and the apothegms of Erasmus. The two following have the greatest appearance of being genuine:

A Greek, complaining that he had spoken ill

[1] Serassi, ii. 276.

[2] "Quem *cernis*, quisquis es, procera statura virum, *luscis* oculis, &c. hic Torquatus est."—Cappacio, *Illustrium Literis Virorum Elogia et Judicia*, quoted by Serassi, ut sup. The Latin word *luscus*, as well as the Italian *losco*, means, I believe, near-sighted; but it certainly means also a great deal more; and unless the word *cernis* (thou beholdest) is a mere form of speech implying a foregone conclusion, it shews that the defect was obvious to the spectator.

of his country, and maintaining that all the virtues in the world had issued out of it, the poet assented; with the addition, that they had not left one behind them.

A foolish young fellow, garnished with a number of golden chains, coming into a room where he was, and being overheard by him exclaiming, "Is this the great man that was mad?" Tasso said, "Yes; but that people had never put on him more than one chain at a time."

His character may be gathered, but not perhaps entirely, from what has been written of his life; for some of his earlier letters shew him to have been not quite so grave and refined in his way of talking as readers of the *Jerusalem* might suppose. He was probably at that time of life not so scrupulous in his morals as he professed to be during the greater part of it. His mother is thought to have died of chagrin and impatience at being separated so long from her husband, and not knowing what to do to save her dowry from her brothers; and I take her son to have combined his mother's ultra-sensitive organisation with his father's worldly imprudence and unequal spirits. The addition of the nervous temperament of one parent to the aspiring nature of the other gave rise to the poet's trembling eager-

ness for distinction; and Torquato's very love for them both hindered him from seeing what should have been corrected in the infirmities which he inherited. Falling from the highest hopes of prosperity into the most painful afflictions, he thus wanted solid principles of action to support him, and was forced to retreat upon an excess of self-esteem, which allowed his pride to become a beggar, and his naturally kind, loving, just, and heroical disposition to condescend to almost every species of inconsistency. The Duke of Ferrara, he complains, did not believe a word he said;[1] and the fact is, that, partly from disease, and partly from a want of courage to look his defects in the face, he beheld the same things in so many different lights, and according as it suited him at the moment, that, without intending falsehood, his statements are really not to be relied on. He degraded even his verses, sometimes with panegyrics for interest's sake, sometimes out of weak wishes to oblige, of which he was afterwards ashamed; and, with the exception of Constantini, we cannot be sure that any one person praised in them retained his regard in his last days. His suspicion made him a kind of Rousseau; but he

1 "Il Signor Duca non crede ad alcuna mia parola." *Opere*, xiv. 161.

was more amiable than the Genevese, and far from being in the habit of talking against old acquaintances, whatever he might have thought of them. It is observable, not only that he never married, but he told Manso he had led a life of entire continence ever since he entered the walls of his prison, being then in his thirty-fifth year.[1] Was this out of fidelity to some mistress? or the consequence of a previous life the reverse of continent? or was it from some principle of superstition? He had become a devotee, apparently out of a dread of disbelief; and he remained extremely religious for the rest of his days. The two unhappiest of Italian poets, Tasso and Dante, were the two most superstitious.

As for the once formidable question concerning the comparative merits of this poet and Ariosto, which anticipated the modern quarrels of the classical and romantic schools, some idea of the treatment which Tasso experienced may be conceived by supposing all that used to be sarcastic and bitter in the periodical party-criticism among

[1] "Fui da bocca di lui medesimo rassicurato, che dal tempo del suo ritegno in sant' Anna, ch' avenne negli anni trentacinque della sua vita e sedici avanti la morte, egli intieramente fu casto: degli anni primi non mi favellò mai di modo ch' io possa alcuna cosa di certo qui raccontare." *Opere*, xxxiii. 235.

ourselves some thirty years back, collected into one huge vial of wrath, and poured upon the new poet's head. Even the great Galileo, who was a man of wit, bred up in the pure Tuscan school of Berni and Casa, and who was an idolator of Ariosto, wrote, when he was young, a "review" of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, which it is painful to read, it is so unjust and contemptuous.[1] But now that the only final arbiter, posterity, has accepted both the poets, the dispute is surely the easiest thing in the world to settle; not, indeed, with prejudices of creeds or temperaments, but before any judges thoroughly sympathising with the two claimants. Its solution is the principle of the greater including the less. For Ariosto errs only by having an unbounded circle to move in. His sympathies are unlimited; and those who think him inferior to Tasso, only do so in consequence of their own want of sympathy with the vivacities that degrade him in their eyes. Ariosto can be as grave and exalted as Tasso when he pleases, and he could do a hundred things which Tasso never attempted. He is as different in this respect as Shakspeare from Milton. He had far more knowledge of mankind than Tasso, and he

[1] It is to be found in the collected works, *ut supra*, both of the philosopher and the poet.

was superior in point of taste. But it is painful to make disadvantageous comparisons of one great poet with another. Let us be thankful for Tasso's enchanted gardens, without being forced to vindicate the universal world of his predecessor. Suffice it to bear in mind, that the grave poet himself agreed with the rest of the Italians in calling the Ferrarese the "divine Ariosto;" a title which has never been popularly given to his rival.

The *Jerusalem Delivered* is the history of a Crusade, related with poetic license. The Infidels are assisted by unlawful arts; and the libertinism that brought scandal on the Christians, is converted into youthful susceptibility, led away by enchantment. The author proposed to combine the ancient epic poets with Ariosto, or a simple plot, and uniformly dignified style, with romantic varieties of adventure, and the luxuriance of fairy-land. He did what he proposed to do, but with a judgment inferior to Virgil's; nay, in point of the interdependence of the adventures, to Ariosto, and with far less general vigour. The mixture of affectation with his dignity is so frequent, that, whether Boileau's famous line about Tasso's tinsel and Virgil's gold did or did not mean to imply that the *Jerusalem* was nothing but tinsel, and the

Æneid all gold, it is certain that the tinsel is so interwoven with the gold, as to render it more of a rule than an exception, and put a provoking distance between Tasso's epic pretensions and those of the greatest masters of the art. People who take for granted the conceits because of the "wildness" of Ariosto, and the good taste because of the "regularity" of Tasso, just assume the reverse of the fact. It is a rare thing to find a conceit in Ariosto; and, where it does exist, it is most likely defensible on some Shakspearian ground of subtle propriety. Open Tasso in almost any part, particularly the love-scenes, and it is marvellous if, before long, you do not see the conceits vexatiously interfering with the beauties.

"Oh maraviglia! Amor, che appena è nato,
Già grande vola, e già trionfa armato." Canto i. st. 47.

Oh, miracle! Love is scarce born, when, lo,
He flies full wing'd, and lords it with his bow!

"Se 'l miri fulminar ne l' arme avvolto,
Marte lo stimi; Amor, se scopre il volto." St. 58.

Mars you would think him, when his thund'ring race
In arms he ran; Love, when he shew'd his face.

Which is as little true to reason as to taste; for no god of war could look like a god of love. The habit of mind would render it impossible. But

the poet found the prettiness of the Greek Anthology irresistible.

Olindo, tied to the stake amidst the flames of martyrdom, can say to his mistress:

"Altre fiamme, altri nodi amor promise." Canto ii. st. 34.
Other flames, other bonds than these, love promised.

The sentiment is natural, but the double use of the "flames" on such an occasion, miserable.

In the third canto the fair Amazon Clorinda challenges her love to single combat.

"E di due morti in un punto lo sfida." St. 23.
"And so at once she threats to kill him twice." *Fairfax.*

That is to say, with her valour and beauty.

Another twofold employment of flame, with an exclamation to secure our astonishment, makes its appearance in the fourth canto:

"Oh miracol d' amor! che le faville
Tragge del pianto, e i cor' ne l' acqua accende." St. 76.
Oh, miracle of love! that draweth sparks
Of fire from tears, and kindlest hearts in water!

This puerile antithesis of *fire* and *water*, *fire* and *ice*, *light* in *darkness*, *silence* in *speech*, together with such pretty turns as *wounding one's-self in wounding others*, and the worse sacrifice of consistency and truth of feeling,—lovers making long speeches on the least fitting occasions, and ladies

retaining their rosy cheeks in the midst of fears of death,—is to be met with, more or less, throughout the poem. I have no doubt they were the proximate cause of that general corruption of taste which was afterwards completed by Marino, the acquaintance and ardent admirer of Tasso when a boy. They have been laid to the charge of Petrarch; but, without entering into the question, how far and in what instances conceits may not be natural to lovers haunted, as Petrarch was, with one idea, and seeing it in every thing they behold, what had the great epic poet to do with the faults of the lyrical? And what is to be said for his standing in need of the excuse of bad example? Homer and Milton were in no such want. Virgil would not have copied the tricks of Ovid. There is an effeminacy and self-reflection in Tasso, analogous to his Rinaldo, in the enchanted garden; where the hero wore a looking-glass by his side, in which he contemplated his sophisticated self, and the meretricious beauty of his enchantress.[1]

[1] It is an extraordinary instance of a man's violating, in older life, the better critical principles of his youth,—that Tasso, in his *Discourses on Poetry*, should have objected to a passage in Ariosto about sighs and tears, as being a "conceit too lyrical," (though it was warranted by the subtleties of madness, see present volume, p. 219), and yet afterwards riot in the same conceits when wholly without warrant.

Agreeably to this tendency to weakness, the style of Tasso, when not supported by great occasions (and even the occasion itself sometimes fails him), is too apt to fall into tameness and commonplace,—to want movement and picture; while, at the same time, with singular defect of enjoyment, it does not possess the music which might be expected from a lyrical and voluptuous poet. Bernardo prophesied of his son, that, however he might surpass him in other respects, he would never equal him in sweetness; and he seems to have judged him rightly. I have met with a passage in Torquato's prose writings (but I cannot lay my hands on it), in which he expresses a singular predilection for verses full of the same vowel. He seems, if I remember rightly, to have regarded it, not merely as a pleasing variety, which it is on occasion, but as a reigning principle. Voltaire (I think, in his treatise on *Epic Poetry*) has noticed the multitude of *o*'s in the exordium of the *Jerusalem*. This apparent negligence seems to have been intentional.

" Cantò l' armi pietòse e 'l capitanò
Che 'l gran Sepòlcrò liberò di Cristò;
Mòltò egli òprò còl sennò e còn la manò,
Mòltò sòffri nel glòriòsò acquistò;
E invan l' infernò a lui s' òppòse; e invanò
S' armò d' Asia e di Libia il pòpòl mistò;

Che il ciel gli diè favòre, e sòttò ai santi
Segni ridusse i suòi còmpagni erranti."

The reader will not be surprised to find, that he who could thus confound monotony with music, and commence his greatest poem with it, is too often discordant in the rest of his versification. It has been thought, that Milton might have taken from the Italians the grand musical account to which he turns a list of proper names, as in his enumerations of realms and deities; but I have been surprised to find how little the most musical of languages appears to have suggested to its poets anything of the sort. I am not aware of it, indeed, in any poets but our own. All others, from Homer, with his catalogue of leaders and ships, down to Metastasio himself, though he wrote for music, appear to have overlooked this opportunity of playing a voluntary of fine sounds, where they had no other theme on which to modulate. Its inventor, as far as I am aware, is that great poet, Marlowe.[1]

[1] Δαρδανιων αυτ' ηρχεν, εϋς παις Αγχισαο,
Αινειας· τον ὑπ' Αγχισῃ τεκε δι' Αφροδιτη
Ιδης εν κνημοισι, θεα βροτῳ ευνηθεισα·
Ουκ οιος· ἁμα τῳγε δυω Αντηνορος υἱε,
Αρχιλοχος τ', Ακαμας τε, μαχης ευ ειδοτε πασης.
Iliad, ii. 819.

It is curious that these five lines should abound as much in *a's* as

There are faults of invention as well as style in the *Jerusalem.* The Talking Bird, or bird that sings with a human voice (canto iv. 13), is a piece of inverisimilitude, which the author, perhaps,

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Tasso's first stanza does in *o*'s. Similar monotonies are strikingly observable in the nomenclatures of Virgil. See his most perfect poem, the *Georgics:*

" Omnià secum
'Armentàrius 'Afer àgit, tectumque, Làremque,
'Armàque, 'Amyclæumque cànem, Cressàmque pharetràm."
Lib. iii. 343.

It is clear that Dante never thought of this point. See his Mangiadore, Sanvittore, Natan, Raban, &c. at the end of the twelfth canto of the *Paradiso.* Yet in his time poetry was *recitatived* to music. So it was in Petrarch's, who was a lutenist, and who " tried" his verses, to see how they would go to the instrument. Yet Petrarch could allow himself to write such a quatrain as the following list of rivers:

" Non Tesin, Pò, Varo, Arno, Àdige e Tebro,
Eufrate, Tigre, Nilo, Ermo, Indo e Gange,
Tana, Istro, Alfeo, Garrona, è 'l mar che frange,
Rodàno, Ibero, Ren, Senna, *Albia, Era, Ebro!*"

In Tasso's *Sette Giornate,* to which Black thinks Milton indebted for his grand use of proper names, the following is the way in which the poet writes:

" Di Silvàni
Di Pàni, e d' Egipàni, e d' àltri erràntì,
Ch' empier lè solitarìè incultè selvè
D' antichè maravigliè; e quell' accòltò
Esercitò di Baccò in òriente
Ond' egli vinse, e trionfò degl' Indi,

thought justifiable by the speaking horses of the ancients. But the latter were moved supernaturally for the occasion, and for a very fine occasion. Tasso's bird is a mere born contradiction

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Tornandò glòriòsò ai Greci lidi,
Siccòm' e favòlòsò anticò gridò."

The most diversified passage of this kind (as far as I am aware) is Ariosto's list of his friends at the close of the *Orlando;* and yet such writing as follows would seem to shew that it was an accident:

" Iò veggiò il Fracastòrò, il Bevazzanò,
Trifòn Gabriel, e il Tassò più lòntanò;
Veggò Niccòlò Tiepoli, e còn essò
Niccòlò Amaniò in me affissar le ciglia;
Autòn Fulgòsò, ch' a vedermi appressò
Al litò, mòstra gaudiò e maraviglia.
Il miò Valeriò e quel che là s' è messò
Fuòr de le dònne," &c.

Even Metastasio, who wrote expressly for singers, and often with exquisite modulation, especially in his songs, forgets himself when he comes to the names of his *dramatis personæ*,—"'Artàserse, 'Artàbàno, 'Arbàce, Màndàne, Semirà, Megàbise,"—all in one play.

" Gran cose io temo. Il mio germàno 'Arbàce
Pàrte prià de l' aurorà. Il pàdre armàto
Incontro, e non mi pàrlà. 'Accusà il cielo
'Agitàto 'Artàserse, e m' àbbàndonà." Atto i. sc. 6.

I am far from intending to say that these reiterations are not sometimes allowable, nay, often beautiful and desirable. Alliteration itself may be rendered an exquisite instrument of music. I am only speaking of monotony or discord in the enumeration of proper names.

to nature and for no necessity. The vulgar idea of the devil with horns and a tail (though the retention of it argued a genius in Tasso very inferior to that of Milton) is defensible, I think, on the plea of the German critics, that malignity should be made a thing low and deformed; but as much cannot be said for the storehouse in heaven, where St. Michael's spear is kept with which he slew the dragon, and the trident which is used for making earthquakes (canto vii. st. 81). The tomb which supernaturally comes out of the ground, inscribed with the name and virtues of Sueno (canto viii. st. 39), is worthy only of a pantomime; and the wizard in robes, with beech-leaves on his head, who walks dry-shod on water, and superfluously helps the knights on their way to Armida's retirement (xiv. 33), is almost as ludicrous as the burlesque of the river-god in the *Voyage* of Bachaumont and Chapelle.

But let us not wonder, nevertheless, at the effect which the *Jerusalem* has had upon the world. It could not have had it without great nature and power. Rinaldo, in spite of his aberrations with Armida, knew the path to renown, and so did his poet. Tasso's epic, with all its faults, is a noble production, and justly considered one of the poems of the world. Each of those poems hit

some one great point of universal attraction, at least in their respective countries, and among the givers of fame in others. Homer's poem is that of action; Dante's, of passion; Virgil's, of judgment; Milton's, of religion; Spenser's, of poetry itself; Ariosto's, of animal spirits (I do not mean as respects gaiety only, but in strength and readiness of accord with the whole play of nature); Tasso looked round with an ultra-sensitive temperament, and an ambition which required encouragement, and his poem is that of tenderness. Every thing inclines to this point in his circle, with the tremulousness of the needle. Love is its all in all, even to the design of the religious war which is to rescue the sepulchre of the God of Charity from the hands of the unloving. His heroes are all in love, at least those on the right side; his leader, Godfrey, notwithstanding his prudence, narrowly escapes the passion, and is full of a loving consideration; his amazon, Clorinda, inspires the truest passion, and dies taking her lover's hand; his Erminia is all love for an enemy; his enchantress Armida falls from pretended love into real, and forsakes her religion for its sake. An old father (canto ix.) loses his five sons in battle, and dies on their dead bodies of a wound which he has provoked on purpose. Tancred cannot achieve

the enterprise of the Enchanted Forest, because his dead mistress seems to come out of one of the trees. Olindo thinks it happiness to be martyred at the same stake with Sophronia. The reconciliation of Rinaldo with his enchantress takes place within a few stanzas of the close of the poem, as if contesting its interest with religion. The *Jerusalem Delivered*, in short, is the favourite epic of the young: all the lovers in Europe have loved it. The French have forgiven the author his conceits for the sake of his gallantry: he is the poet of the gondoliers; and Spenser, the most luxurious of his brethren, plundered his bowers of bliss. Read Tasso's poem by this gentle light of his genius, and you pity him twentyfold, and know not what excuse to find for his jailer.

The stories translated in the present volume, though including war and magic, are all love-stories. They were not selected on that account. They suggested themselves for selection, as containing most of the finest things in the poem. They are conducted with great art, and the characters and affections happily varied. The first (*Olindo and Sophronia*) is perhaps unique for the hopelessness of its commencement (I mean with regard to the lovers), and the perfect, and at the same time quite probable, felicity of the conclu-

sion. There is no reason to believe that the staid and devout Sophronia would have loved her adorer at all, but for the circumstance that first dooms them both to a shocking death, and then sends them, with perfect warrant, from the stake to the altar. Clorinda is an Amazon, the idea of whom, as such, it is impossible for us to separate from very repulsive and unfeminine images; yet, under the circumstances of the story, we call to mind in her behalf the possibility of a Joan of Arc's having loved and been beloved; and her death is a surprising and most affecting variation upon that of Agrican in Boiardo. Tasso's enchantress Armida is a variation of the Angelica of the same poet, combined with Ariosto's Alcina; but her passionate voluptuousness makes her quite a new character in regard to the one; and she is as different from the painted hag of the *Orlando* as youth, beauty, and patriotic intention can make her. She is not very sentimental; but all the passion in the world has sympathised with her; and it was manly and honest in the poet not to let her Paganism and vehemence hinder him from doing justice to her claims as a human being and a deserted woman. Her fate is left in so pleasing a state of doubt, that we gladly avail ourselves of it to suppose her married to Rinaldo, and becoming the mother of a line of

Christian princes. I wish they had treated her poet half so well as she would infallibly have treated him herself.

But the singer of the Crusades can be strong as well as gentle. You discern in his battles and single combats the poet ambitious of renown, and the accomplished swordsman. The duel of Tancred and Argantes, in which the latter is slain, is as earnest and fiery writing throughout as truth and passion could desire; that of Tancred and Clorinda is also very powerful as well as affecting; and the whole siege of Jerusalem is admirable for the strength of its interest. Every body knows the grand verse (not, however, quite original) that summons the devils to council, "Chiama gli abitator," &c.; and the still grander, though less original one, describing the desolations of time, "Giace l' alta Cartago."[1] The forest filled with supernatural terrors by a magician, in order that the Christians may not cut wood from it to make their engines of war, is one of the happiest pieces of invention in romance. It is founded in as true human feeling as those of Ariosto, and is made an admirable instrument for the aggrandizement of the character of Rinaldo. Godfrey's attestation of all

[1] See them both in the present volume, pp. 420 and 445.

time, and of the host of heaven, when he addresses his army in the first canto, is in the highest spirit of epic magnificence. So is the appearance of the celestial armies, together with that of the souls of the slain Christian warriors, in the last canto, where they issue forth in the air to assist the entrance into the conquered city. The classical poets are turned to great and frequent account throughout the poem; and yet the work has a strong air of originality, partly owing to the subject, partly to the abundance of love-scenes, and to a certain compactness in the treatment of the main story, notwithstanding the luxuriance of the episodes. The *Jerusalem Delivered* is stately, well-ordered, full of action and character, sometimes sublime, always elegant, and very interesting—more so, I think, as a whole, and in a popular sense, than any other story in verse, not excepting the *Odyssey*. For the exquisite domestic attractiveness of the second Homeric poem is injured, like the hero himself, by too many diversions from the main point. There is an interest, it is true, in that very delay; but we become too much used to the disappointment. In the epic of Tasso the reader constantly desires to learn how the success of the enterprise is to be brought about; and he scarcely loses sight of any

of the persons but he wishes to see them again. Even in the love-scenes, tender and absorbed as they are, we feel that the heroes are fighters, or going to fight. When you are introduced to Armida in the Bower of Bliss, it is by warriors who come to take her lover away to battle.

One of the reasons why Tasso hurt the style of his poem by a manner too lyrical was, that notwithstanding its deficiency in sweetness, he was one of the profusest lyrical writers of his nation, and always having his feelings turned in upon himself. I am not sufficiently acquainted with his odes and sonnets to speak of them in the gross; but I may be allowed to express my belief that they possess a great deal of fancy and feeling. It has been wondered how he could write so many, considering the troubles he went through; but the experience was the reason. The constant succession of hopes, fears, wants, gratitudes, loves, and the necessity of employing his imagination, accounts for all. Some of his sonnets, such as those on the Countess of Scandiano's lip ("Quel labbro," &c.); the one to Stigliano, concluding with the affecting mention of himself and his lost harp; that beginning

"Io veggio in ciela scintillar le stelle,"

recur to my mind oftener than any others except Dante's "Tanto gentile" and Filicaia's *Lament on Italy;* and, with the exception of a few of the more famous odes of Petrarch, and one or two of Filicaia's and Guidi's, I know of none in Italian like several of Tasso's, including his fragment "O del grand' Apennino," and the exquisite chorus on the *Golden Age,* which struck a note in the hearts of the world.

His *Aminta,* the chief pastoral poem of Italy, though, with the exception of that ode, not equal in passages to the *Faithful Shepherdess* (which is a Pan to it compared with a beardless shepherd), is elegant, interesting, and as superior to Guarini's more sophisticate yet still beautiful *Pastor Fido* as a first thought may be supposed to be to its emulator. The objection of its being too elegant for shepherds he anticipated and nullified by making Love himself account for it in a charming prologue, of which the god is the speaker:

"Queste selve oggi ragionar d' Amore
S' udranno in nuova guisa; e ben parassi,
Che la mia Deità sia quì presente
In se medesma, e non ne' suoi ministri.
Spirerò nobil sensi à rozzi petti;
Raddolcirò nelle lor lingue il suono:
Perchè, ovunque i' mi sia, io sono Amore

Ne' pastori non men che negli eroi;
E la disagguaglianza de' soggetti,
Come a me piace, agguaglio: e questa è pure
Suprema gloria, e gran miracol mio,
Render simili alle più dotte cetre
Le rustiche sampogne."

After new fashion shall these woods to-day
Hear love discoursed; and it shall well be seen
That my divinity is present here
In its own person, not its ministers.
I will inbreathe high fancies in rude hearts;
I will refine and render dulcet sweet
Their tongues; because, wherever I may be,
Whether with rustic or heroic men,
There am I Love; and inequality,
As it may please me, do I equalise;
And 'tis my crowning glory and great miracle
To make the rural pipe as eloquent
Even as the subtlest harp.

I ought not to speak of Tasso's other poetry, or of his prose, for I have read little of either; though, as they are not popular with his countrymen, a foreigner may be pardoned for thinking his classical tragedy, *Torrismondo*, not attractive—his *Sette Giornate* (Seven Days of the Creation) still less so—and his platonical and critical discourses better filled with authorities than reasons.

Tasso was a lesser kind of Milton, enchanted by the Sirens. We discern the weak parts of his

character, more or less, in all his writings; but we see also the irrepressible elegance and superiority of the mind, which, in spite of all weakness, was felt to tower above its age, and to draw to it the homage as well as the resentment of princes.

OLINDO AND SOPHRONIA.

Argument.

THE Mahomedan king of Jerusalem, at the instigation of Ismeno, a magician, deprives a Christian church of its image of the Virgin, and sets it up in a mosque, under a spell of enchantment, as a palladium against the Crusaders. The image is stolen in the night; and the king, unable to discover who has taken it, orders a massacre of the Christian portion of his subjects, which is prevented by Sophronia's accusing herself of the offence. Her lover, Olindo, finding her sentenced to the stake in consequence, disputes with her the right of martyrdom. He is condemned to suffer with her. The Amazon Clorinda, who has come to fight on the side of Aladin, obtains their pardon in acknowledgment of her services; and Sophronia, who had not loved Olindo before, now returns his passion, and goes with him from the stake to the marriage-altar.

OLINDO AND SOPHRONIA.

GODFREY of Boulogne, the leader of the Crusaders, was now in full march for Jerusalem with the Christian army; and Aladin, the old infidel king, became agitated with wrath and terror. He had heard nothing but accounts of the enemy's irresistible advance. There were many Christians within his walls whose insurrection he dreaded; and though he had appeared to grow milder with age, he now, in spite of the frost in his veins, felt as hot for cruelty, as the snake excited by the fire of summer. He longed to stifle his fears of insurrection by a massacre, but dreaded the consequence in the event of the city's being taken. He therefore contented himself, for the present, with laying waste the country round about it, destroying every possible receptacle of the invaders, poisoning the wells, and doubly fortifying the only weak point in his fortifications.

At this juncture the renegade Ismeno stood before him—a bad old man who had studied unlawful arts. He could bind and loose evil spirits, and draw the dead out of their tombs, restoring to them breath and perception. This man told the king, that in the church belonging to his Christian subjects there was an altar underground, on which stood a veiled image of the woman whom they worshipped—the mother, as they called her, of their dead and buried God. A dazzling light burnt for ever before it; and the walls were hung with the offerings of her credulous devotees. If this image, he said, were taken away by the king's own hand, and set up in a mosque, such a spell of enchantment could be thrown about it as should render the city impregnable so long as the idol was kept safe.

Aladin proceeded instantly to the Christian temple, and, treating the priests with violence, tore the image from its shrine and conveyed it to his own place of worship. The necromancer then muttered before it his blasphemous enchantment.

But the light of morning no sooner appeared in the mosque, than the official to whose charge the palladium had been committed missed it from its place, and in vain searched every other to find it. In truth in never was found again; nor is it

known to this day how it went. Some think the Christians took it; others that Heaven interfered in order to save it from profanation. And well (says the poet) does it become a pious humility so to think of a disappearance so wonderful.

The king, who fell into a paroxysm of rage, not doubting that some Christian was the offender, issued a proclamation setting a price on the head of any one who concealed it. But no discovery was made. The necromancer resorted to his art with as little effect. The king then ordered a general Christian massacre. His savage wrath hugged itself on the reflection, that the criminal would be sure to perish, perish else who might.

The Christians heard the order with an astonishment that took away all their powers of resistance. The suddenness of the presence of death stupified them. They did not resort even to an entreaty. They waited, like sheep, to be butchered. Little did they think what kind of saviour was at hand.

There was a maiden among them of ripe years, grave and beautiful; one who took no heed of her beauty, but was altogether absorbed in high and holy thoughts. If she thought of her beauty ever, it was only to subject it to the dignity of virtue. The greater her worth, the more she concealed it

from the world, living a close life at home, and veiling herself from all eyes.

But the rays of such a jewel could not but break through their casket. Love would not consent to have it so locked up. Love turned her very retirement into attraction. There was a youth who had become enamoured of this hidden treasure. His name was Olindo; Sophronia was that of the maiden. Olindo, like herself, was a Christian; and the humbleness of his passion was equal to the worth of her that inspired it. He desired much, hoped little, asked nothing.[1] He either knew not how to disclose his love, or did not dare it. And she either despised it, or did not, or would not, see it. The poor youth, up to this day, had got nothing by his devotion, not even a look.

The maiden, who was nevertheless as generous as she was virtuous, fell into deep thought how she might save her Christian brethren. She soon came to her resolve. She delayed the execution of it a little, only out of a sense of virgin decorum, which, in its turn, made her still more resolute. She issued forth by herself, in the sight

[1] "Brama assai, poco spera, e nulla chiede."
Canto ii. st. 16.
A line justly famous.

of all, not muffling up her beauty, nor yet exposing it. She withdrew her eyes beneath a veil, and, attired neither with ostentation nor carelessness, passed through the streets with unaffected simplicity, admired by all save herself. She went straight before the king. His angry aspect did not repel her. She drew aside the veil, and looked him steadily in the face.

"I am come," she said, "to beg that you will suspend your wrath, and withhold the orders given to your people. I know and will give up the author of the deed which has offended you, on that condition."

At the noble confidence thus displayed, at the sudden apparition of so much lofty and virtuous beauty, the king's countenance was confused, and its angry expression abated. Had his spirit been less stern, or the look she gave him less firm in its purpose, he would have loved her. But haughty beauty and haughty beholder are seldom drawn together. Glances of pleasure are the baits of love. And yet, if the ungentle king was not enamoured, he was impressed. He was bent on gazing at her; he felt an emotion of delight.

"Say on," he replied; "I accept the condition."

"Behold then," said she, "the offender. The

deed was the work of this hand. It was I that conveyed away the image. I am she whom you look for. I am the criminal to be punished."

And as she spake, she bent her head before him, as already yielding it to the executioner.

Oh, noble falsehood! when was truth to be compared with thee?[1]

The king was struck dumb. He did not fall into his accustomed transports of rage. When he recovered from his astonishment, he said, "Who advised you to do this? Who was your accomplice?"

"Not a soul," replied the maiden. "I would not have allowed another person to share a particle of my glory. I alone knew of the deed; I alone counselled it; I alone did it."

"Then be the consequence," cried he, "on your own head!"

"'Tis but just," returned Sophronia. "Mine was the sole honour; mine, therefore, should be the only punishment."

The tyrant at this began to feel the accession of his old wrath. "Where," he said, "have you hidden the image?"

[1] "Magnanima menzogna! or quando è il vero
Sì bello, che si possa a te preporre?"

"I did not hide it," she replied, "I burnt it. I thought it fit and righteous to do so. I knew of no other way to save it from the hands of the unbelieving. Ask not for what will never again be found. Be content with the vengeance you have before you."

Oh, chaste heart! oh, exalted soul! oh, creature full of nobleness! think not to find a forgiving moment return. Beauty itself is thy shield no longer.

The glorious maiden is taken and bound. The cruel king has condemned her to the stake. Her veil, and the mantle that concealed her chaste bosom, are torn away, and her soft arms tied with a hard knot behind her. She said nothing; she was not terrified; but yet she was not unmoved. Her bosom heaved in spite of its courage. Her lovely colour was lost in a pure white.

The news spread in an instant, and the city crowded to the sight, Christians and all, Olindo among them. He had thought within himself, "What if it should be Sophronia!" But when he beheld that it was she indeed, and not only condemned, but already at the stake, he made way through the crowd with violence, crying out, "This is not the person,—this poor simpleton! She never thought of such a thing; she

had not the courage to do it; she had not the strength. How was she to carry the sacred image away? Let her abide by her story if she dare. I did it."

Such was the love of the poor youth for her that loved him not.

When he came up to the stake, he gave a formal account of what he pretended to have done. "I climbed in," he said, "at the window of your mosque at night, and found a narrow passage round to the image, where nobody could expect to meet me. I shall not suffer the penalty to be usurped by another. I did the deed, and I will have the honour of doing it, now that it comes to this. Let our places be changed."

Sophronia had looked up when she heard the youth call out, and she gazed on him with eyes of pity. "What madness is this!" exclaimed she. "What can induce an innocent person to bring destruction on himself for nothing? Can I not bear the thing by myself? Is the anger of one man so tremendous, that one person cannot sustain it? Trust me, friend, you are mistaken. I stand in no need of your company."

Thus spoke Sophronia to her lover; but not a whit was he disposed to alter his mind. Oh, great and beautiful spectacle! Love and virtue at strife;

—death the prize they contend for;—ruin itself the salvation of the conqueror!

But the contest irritated the king. He felt himself set at nought; felt death itself despised, as if in despite of the inflictor. "Let them be taken at their words," cried he; "let both have the prize they long for."

The youth is seized on the instant, and bound like the maiden. Both are tied to the stake, and set back to back. They behold not the face of one another. The wood is heaped round about them; the fire is kindled.

The youth broke out into lamentations, but only loud enough to be heard by his fellow-sufferer. "Is this, then," said he, "the bond which I hoped might join us? Is this the fire which I thought might possibly warm two lovers' hearts?[1] Too long (is it not so?) have we been divided, and now too cruelly are we united: too cruelly, I say, but not as regards me; for since I am not to be partner of thy existence, gladly do I share thy death. It is thy fate, not mine, that afflicts me. Oh! too happy were it to me, too sweet and fortunate, if I could obtain grace enough to be set with thee heart to heart, and

[1] This conceit is more dwelt upon in the original, coupled with the one noticed at p. 362.

so breathe out my soul into thy lips! Perhaps thou wouldst do the like with mine, and so give me thy last sigh."

Thus spoke the youth in tears; but the maiden gently reproved him.

She said: "Other thoughts, my friend, and other lamentations befit a time like this. Why thinkest thou not of thy sins, and of the rewards which God has promised to the righteous? Meet thy sufferings in his name; so shall their bitterness be made sweet, and thy soul be carried into the realms above. Cast thine eyes upwards, and behold them. See how beautiful is the sky; how the sun seems to invite thee towards it with its splendour."

At words so noble and piteous as these, the Pagans themselves, who stood within hearing, began to weep. The Christians wept too, but in voices more lowly. Even the king felt an emotion of pity; but disdaining to give way to it, he turned aside and withdrew. The maiden alone partook not of the common grief. She for whom every body wept, wept not for herself.

The flames were now beginning to approach the stake, when there appeared, coming through the crowd, a warrior of noble mien, habited in the arms of another country. The tiger, which

formed the crest of his helmet, drew all eyes to it, for it was a cognizance well known. The people began to think that it was a heroine instead of a hero which they saw, even the famous Clorinda. Nor did they err in the supposition.

A despiser of feminine habits had Clorinda been from her childhood. She disdained to put her hand to the needle and the distaff. She renounced every soft indulgence, every timid retirement, thinking that virtue could be safe wherever it went in its own courageous heart; and so she armed her countenance with pride, and pleased herself with making it stern, but not to the effect she looked for, for the sternness itself pleased. While yet a child her little right hand would control the bit of the charger, and she wielded the sword and spear, and hardened her limbs with wrestling, and made them supple for the race; and then as she grew up, she tracked the footsteps of the bear and lion, and followed the trumpet to the wars; and in those and in the depths of the forest she seemed a wild creature to mankind, and a man to the wildest creature. She had now come out of Persia to wreak her displeasure on the Christians, who had already felt the sharpness of her sword; and as she arrived near this assembled multitude, death was the first thing

that met her eyes, but in a shape so perplexing, that she looked narrowly to discern what it was, and then spurred her horse towards the scene of action. The crowd gave way as she approached, and she halted as she entered the circle round the stake, and sat gazing on the youth and maiden. She wondered to see the male victim lamenting, while the female was mute. But indeed she saw that he was weeping not out of grief but pity; or at least, not out of grief for himself; and as to the maiden, she observed her to be so wrapt up in the contemplation of the heavens at which she was gazing, that she appeared to have already taken leave of earth.

Pity touched the heart of the Amazon, and the tears came into her eyes. She felt sorry for both the victims, but chiefly for the one that said nothing. She turned to a white-headed man beside her, and said, "What is this? Who are these two persons, whom crime, or their ill fortune, has brought hither?"

The man answered her briefly, but to the purpose; and she discerned at once that both must be innocent. She therefore determined to save them. She dismounted, and set the example of putting a stop to the flames, and then said to the officers, "Let nobody continue this work till I

have spoken to the king. Rest assured he will hold you guiltless of the delay." The officers obeyed, being struck with her air of confidence and authority; and she went straight towards the king, who had heard of her arrival, and who was coming to bid her welcome.

"I am Clorinda," she said. "Thou knowest me? Then thou knowest, sir, one who is desirous to defend the good faith and the king of Jerusalem. I am ready for any duty that may be assigned me. I fear not the greatest, nor do I disdain the least. Open field or walled city, no post will come amiss to the king's servant."

"Illustrious maiden," answered the king, "who knoweth not Clorinda? What region is there so distant from Asia, or so far away out of the paths of the sun, to which the sound of thy achievements has not arrived? Joined by thee and by thy sword I fear nothing. Godfrey, methinks, is too slow to attack me. Dost thou ask to which post thou shalt be appointed? To the greatest. None else becomes thee. Thou art lady and mistress of the war."

Clorinda gave the king thanks for his courtesy, and then resumed. "Strange is it, in truth," she said, "to ask my reward before I have earned it; but confidence like this reassures me. Grant me,

for what I propose to do in the good cause, the lives of these two persons. I wave the uncertainty of their offence; I wave the presumption of innocence afforded by their own behaviour. I ask their liberation as a favour. And yet it becomes me, at the same time, to confess, that I do not believe the Christians to have taken the image out of the mosque. It was an impious thing of the magician to put it there. An idol has no business in a Mussulman temple, much less the idols of unbelievers; and my opinion is, that the miracle was the work of Mahomet himself, out of scorn and hatred of the contamination. Let Ismeno prefer his craft, if he will, to the weapons of a man; but let him not take upon himself the defence of a nation of warriors."

The warlike damsel was silent; and the king, though he could with difficulty conquer his anger, yet did so, to please his guest. "They are free," said he; "I can deny nothing to such a petitioner. Whether it be justice or not to absolve them, absolved they are. If they are innocent, I pronounce them so; if guilty, I concede their pardon."

At these words the youth and the maiden were set free. And blissful indeed was the fortune of Olindo; for love, so proved as his, awoke love in

the noble bosom of Sophronia; and so he passed from the stake to the marriage-altar, a husband, instead of a wretch condemned—a lover beloved, instead of a hopeless adorer.

TANCRED AND CLORINDA.

Argument.

The Mussulman Amazon Clorinda, who is beloved by the Christian chief Tancred, goes forth in disguise at night to burn the battering tower of the Christian army. She effects her purpose; but, in retreating from its discoverers, is accidentally shut out of the gate through which she had left the city. She makes her way into the open country, trusting to get in at one of the other gates; but, having been watched by Tancred, who does not know her in the armour in which she is disguised, a combat ensues between them, in which she is slain. She requests baptism in her last moments, and receives it from the hands of her despairing lover.

TANCRED AND CLORINDA.

THE Christians, in their siege of Jerusalem, had brought a huge rolling tower against the walls, from which they battered and commanded the city with such deadly effect, that the generous Amazon Clorinda resolved to go forth in disguise and burn it. She disclosed her design to the chieftain Argantes, for the purpose of recommending to him the care of her damsels, in case any misfortune should happen to her; but the warrior, jealous of the glory of such an enterprise, insisted on partaking it. The old king, weeping for gratitude, joyfully gave them leave; and the Soldan of Egypt, with a generous emulation, would fain have joined them. Argantes was about to give him a disdainful refusal, when the king interposed, and persuaded the Soldan to remain behind, lest the city should miss too many of its best defenders at one time; adding, that the risk of sallying forth should be his, in case the

burners of the tower were pursued on their return. Argantes and the Amazon then retired to prepare for the exploit, and the magician Ismeno compounded two balls of sulphur for the work of destruction.

Clorinda took off her beautiful helmet, and her surcoat of cloth of silver, and laid aside all her haughty arms, and dressed herself (hapless omen!) in black armour without polish, the better to conceal herself from the enemy. Her faithful servant, the good old eunuch Arsetes, who had attended her from infancy, and was now following her about as well as he could with his accustomed zeal, anxiously noticed what she was doing, and guessing it was for some desperate enterprise, entreated her, by his white hairs and all the love he had shewn her, to give it up. Finding his prayers to no purpose, he requested with great emotion that she would give ear to certain matters in her family history, which he at length felt it his duty to disclose. "It would then," he said, "be for herself to judge, whether she would persist in the enterprise or renounce it." Clorinda, at this, looked at the good man, and listened with attention.

"Not long ago," said he, "there reigned in Ethiopia, and perhaps is still reigning, a king

named Senapus, who in common with his people professed the Christian religion. They are a black though a handsome people, and the king and his queen were of the same colour. The king loved her dearly, but was unfortunately so jealous, that he concealed her from the sight of mankind. Had it been in his power, I think he would have hindered the very eyes of heaven from beholding her. The sweet lady, however, was wise and humble, and did every thing she could to please him.

"I was not a Christian myself. I was a Pagan slave, employed among the women about the queen, and making one of her special attendnts.

"It happened, that the royal bed-chamber was painted with the story of a holy knight saving a maiden from a dragon;[1] and the maiden had a face beautifully fair, with blooming cheeks. The queen often prayed and wept before this picture; and it made so great an impression on her, particularly the maiden's face, that when she bore a child, she saw with consternation that the infant's skin was of the same fair colour. This child was thyself.[2]

[1] St. George.

[2] This fiction of a white Ethiop child is taken from the Greek

"Terrified with the thoughts of what her husband would feel at such a sight, what a convincing proof he would hold it of a faith on her part the reverse of spotless,[1] she procured a babe of her own colour by means of a confidant; and before thou wert baptised (which is a ceremony that takes place in Ethiopia later than elsewhere) committed thee to my care to be brought up at a distance. Who shall relate the tears which thy mother poured forth, and the sighs and sobs with which they were interrupted? How many times, when she thought she had given thee the last embrace, did she not gather thee to her bosom once more! At length, raising her eyes to heaven, she said, 'O Thou that seest into the hearts of mortals, and knowest in this matter the spotlessness of mine, dark though it be otherwise with frailty and with sin, save, I pray thee, this innocent creature who is denied the milk of its mother's breast. Vouch-

romance of Heliodorus, book the fourth. The imaginative principle on which it is founded is true to physiology, and Tasso had a right to use it; but the particular and excessive instance does not appear happy in the eyes of a modern reader acquainted with the history of *albinos*.

[1] The conceit is more antithetically put in the original:

"Ch' egli avria del candor che in te si vede
Argomentato in lei non bianca fede."

Canto xii. st. 24.

safe that she resemble her hapless parent in nothing but a chaste life. And thou, celestial warrior, that didst deliver the maiden out of the serpent's mouth, if I have ever lit humble taper on thine altar, and set before thee offerings of gold and incense, be, I implore thee, her advocate. Be her advocate to such purpose, that in every turn of fortune she may be enabled to count on thy good help.' Here she ceased, torn to her very heart-strings, with a face painted of the colour of death; and I, weeping myself, received thee, and bore thee away, hidden in a sweet covering of flowers and leaves.

"I journeyed with thee along a forest, where a tiger came upon us with fury in its eyes. I betook me, alas, to a tree, and left thee lying on the ground, such terror was in me; and the horrible beast looked down upon thee. But it fell to licking thee with its dreadful tongue, and thou didst smile to it, and put thy little hand to its jaws; and, lo, it gave thee suck, being a mother itself; and then, wonderful to relate, it returned into the woods, leaving me to venture down from the tree, and bear thee onward to my place of refuge. There, in a little obscure cottage, I had thee nursed for more than a year; till, feeling that I grew old, I resolved to avail myself of the riches

the queen had given me, and go into my own country, which was Egypt. I set out for it accordingly, and had to cross a torrent where thieves threatened me on one side, and the fierce water on the other. I plunged in, holding thee above the torrent with one hand, till I came to an eddy that tore thee from me. I thought thee lost. What was my delight and astonishment, on reaching the bank, to find that the water itself had tossed thee upon it in safety!

"But I had a dream at night, which seemed to shew me the cause of thy good fortune. A warrior appeared before me with a threatening countenance, holding a sword in my face, and saying in an imperious voice, 'Obey the commands of the child's mother and of me, and baptise it. She is favoured of Heaven, and her lot is in my keeping. It was I that put tenderness in the heart of the wild beast, and even a will to save her in the water. Woe to thee, if thou believest not this vision. It is a message from the skies.'

"The spirit vanished, and I awoke and pursued my journey; but thinking my own creed the true one, and therefore concluding the dream to be false, I baptised thee not; I bred thee what I was myself, a Pagan; and thou didst grow up, and become great and wonderful in arms, surpassing the

deeds of men, and didst acquire riches and lands; and what thy life has been since, thou knowest as well as I; ay, and thou knowest mine own ways too, how I have followed and cautiously waited on thee ever, being to thee both as a servant and father.

"Now yesterday morning, as I lay heavily asleep, in consequence of my troubled mind, the same figure of the warrior made its appearance, but with a countenance still more threatening, and speaking in a louder voice. 'Wretch,' it exclaimed, 'the hour is approaching when Clorinda shall end both her life and her belief. She is mine in despite of thee. Misery be thine.' With these words it darted away as though it flew.

"Consider then, delight of my soul, what these dreams may portend. They threaten thee terrible things; for what reason I know not. Can it be, that mine own faith is the wrong one, and that of thy parents the right? Ah! take thought at least, and repress this daring courage. Lay aside these arms that frighten me."

Tears hindered the old man from saying more. Clorinda grew thoughtful, and felt something of dread, for she had had a like kind of dream. At length, however, cheerfully looking up, she said, "I must follow the faith I was bred in; the faith

which thou thyself bred'st me in, although thy words would now make me doubt it. Neither can I give up the enterprise that calls me forth. Such a withdrawal is not to be expected of an honourable soul. Death may put on the worst face it pleases. I shall not retreat."

The intrepid maiden, however, did her best to console her good friend; but the time having arrived for the adventure, she finally bade him be of good heart, and so left him.

Silently, and in the middle of the night, Argantes and Clorinda took their way down the hills of Jerusalem, and, quitting the gates, went stealthily towards the site of the tower. But its ever-watchful guards were alarmed. They demanded the watch-word; and, not receiving it, cried out, "To arms! to arms!" The dauntless adventurers plunged forwards with their swords; they dashed aside every assailant, pitched the balls of sulphur into the machine, and in a short time, in the midst of a daring conflict, had the pleasure of seeing the smoke and the flame arise, and the whole tower blazing to its destruction. A terrible sight it was to the Christians. Waked up, they came crowding to the place; and the two companions, notwithstanding their skill and audacity, were compelled to make a retreat. The

besieged, with the king at their head, now arrived also, crowding on the walls; and the gate was opened to let the adventurers in. The Soldan issued forth at the same moment to cover the retreat. Argantes was forced through the gate by Clorinda in spite of himself; and she, but for a luckless antagonist, would have followed him; but a soldier aiming at her a last blow, she rushed back to give the man his death; and, in the confusion of the moment, the warders, believing her to have entered, shut up the gate, and the heroine was left without.

Behind Clorinda was the gate—before and round about her was a host of foes; and surely at that moment she thought that her life was drawing to its end. Finding, however, that her dark armour befriended her in the tumult, she mingled with the enemy as though she had been one of themselves, and so, by degrees, picked her way through the confusion caused by the fire. As the wolf, with its bloody mouth, seeks covert in the woods, even so Clorinda got clear out of the multitude into the darkness and the open country.

Not, however, so clear, alas, but that Tancred perceived her—Tancred, her foe in creed, but her adoring lover, whose heart she had conquered in

the midst of strife, and whose passion for her she knew. But now she knew not that he had seen her; nor did he, poor valiant wretch, know that the knight in black armour whom he pursued, was a woman, and Clorinda. Tancred had seen the warrior strike down the assailant at the gate; he had watched him as he picked his way to escape; and Clorinda now heard the unknown Tancred coming swiftly on horseback behind her as she was speeding round towards another gate in hopes of being let in.

The heroine at length turned, and said, "How now, friend?—what is thy business?"

"Death!" answered the pursuer.

"Thou shalt have it," replied the maiden.

The knight, as his enemy was on foot, dismounted, in order to render the combat equal; and their swords are drawn in fury, and the fight begins.[1]

Worthy of the brightest day-time was that fight—worthy of a theatre full of valiant beholders. Be not displeased, O Night! that I draw

[1] The poet here compares his hero and heroine to two jealous "bulls," no happy comparison certainly.

"Vansi a ritrovar non altrimenti
Che duo tori gelosi."

St. 53.

it out of thy bosom, and set it in the serene light of renown: the splendour will but the more exhibit the great shade of thy darkness.

No trial was this of skill—no contest of warding and traversing and taking heed—no artful interchange of blows now pretended, now given in earnest, now glancing. Night-time and rage flung aside all consideration. The swords horribly clashed and hammered on one another. Not a cut descended in vain—not a thrust was without substance. Shame and fury aggravated one another. Every blow became fiercer than the last. They closed—they could use their blades no longer; they dashed the pummels of their swords at one another's faces; they butted and shouldered with helm and buckler. Three times the man threw his arms round the woman with other embraces than those of love—three times they returned to their swords, and cut and slashed one another's bleeding bodies; till at length they were obliged to hold back for the purpose of taking breath.

Tancred and Clorinda stood fronting one another in the darkness, leaning on their swords for want of strength. The last star in the heavens was fading in the tinge of dawn; and Tancred saw that his enemy had lost more blood than

himself, and it made him proud and joyful. Oh, foolish mind of us humans, elated at every fancy of success! Poor wretch! for what dost thou rejoice? How sad will be thy victory! What a misery to look back upon, thy delight! Every drop of that blood will be paid for with worlds of tears!

Dimly thus looking at one another stood the combatants, bleeding a while in peace. At length Tancred, who wished to know his antagonist, said, "It hath been no good fortune of ours to be compelled thus to fight where nobody can behold us; but we have at least become acquainted with the good swords of one another. Let me request, therefore (if to request any thing at such a time be not unbecoming), that I may be no stranger to thy name. Permit me to learn, whatever be the result, who it is that shall honour my death or my victory."

"I am not accustomed," answered the fierce maiden, "to disclose who I am; nor shall I disclose it now. Suffice to hear, that thou seest before thee one of the burners of the tower."

Tancred was exasperated at this discovery. "In an evil moment," cried he, "hast thou said it. Thy silence and thy speech alike disgust me."

Into the combat again they dash, feeble as they

were. Ferocious indeed is the strife in which skill is not thought of, and strength itself is dead; in which valour rages instead of contends, and feebleness becomes hate and fury. Oh, the gates of blood that were set open in wounds upon wounds! If life itself did not come pouring forth, it was only because scorn withheld it.

As in the Ægean Sea, when the south and north winds have lost the violence of their strength, the billows do not subside nevertheless, but retain the noise and magnitude of their first motion; so the continued impulse of the combatants carried them still against one another, hurling them into mutual injury, though they had scarcely life in their bodies.[1]

And now the fatal hour has come when Clorinda must die. The sword of Tancred is in her bosom to the very hilt. The stomacher under the cuirass which enclosed it is filled with a hot flood.

[1] "Qual l' alto Egeo, perche Aquilone o Noto
Cessi, che tutto prima il volse e scosse,
Non s' accheta però, ma 'l suono e 'l moto
Ritien de l' onde anco agitate e grosse;
Tal, se ben manca in lor col sangue voto
Quel vigor che le braccia ai colpi mosse,
Serbano ancor l' impeto primo, e vanno
Da quel sospinti a giunger danno a danno."

Canto xii. st. 63.

Her legs give way beneath her. She falls—she feels that she is departing. The conqueror, with a still threatening countenance, prepares to follow up his victory, and treads on her as she lies.

But a new spirit had come upon her—the spirit which called the beloved of Heaven to itself; and, speaking in a sorrowing voice, she thus uttered her last words:

"My friend, thou hast conquered—I forgive thee. Forgive thou me, not for my body's sake, which fears nothing, but for the sake, alas, of my soul. Baptise me, I beseech thee."

There was something in the voice, as the dying person spake these words, that went, he knew not why, to the heart of Tancred. The tears forced themselves into his eyes. Not far off there was a little stream, and the conqueror went to it and filled his helmet; and returning, prepared for the pious office by unlacing his adversary's helmet. His hands trembled when he first beheld the forehead, though he did not yet know it; but when the vizor was all down, and the face disclosed, he remained without speech and motion.

Oh, the sight! oh, the recognition!

He did not die. He summoned up all the powers within him to support his heart for that moment. He resolved to hold up his duty above

his misery, and give life with the sweet water to her whom he had slain with sword. He dipped his fingers in it, and marked her forehead with the cross, and repeated the words of the sacred office; and while he was repeating them, the sufferer changed countenance for joy, and smiled, and seemed to say, in the cheerfulness of her departure, "The heavens are opening—I go in peace." A paleness and a shade together then came over her countenance, as if lilies had been mixed with violets. She looked up at heaven, and heaven itself might be thought for very tenderness to be looking at her; and then she raised a little her hand towards that of the knight (for she could not speak), and so gave it him in sign of goodwill; and with his pressure of it her soul passed away, and she seemed asleep.

But Tancred no sooner beheld her dead, than all the strength of mind which he had summoned up to support him fell flat on the instant. He would have given way to the most frantic outcries; but life and speech seemed to be shut up in one point in his heart; despair seized him like death, and he fell senseless beside her. And surely he would have died indeed, had not a party of his countrymen happened to come up. They were looking for water, and had found it, and they dis-

covered the bodies at the same time. The leader knew Tancred by his arms. The beautiful body of Clorinda, though he deemed her a Pagan, he would not leave exposed to the wolves; so he directed them both to be carried to the pavilion of Tancred, and there placed in separate chambers.

Dreadful was the waking of Tancred—not for the solemn whispering around him—not for his aching wounds, terrible as they were,—but for the agony of the recollection that rushed upon him. He would have gone staggering out of the pavilion to seek the remains of his Clorinda, and save them from the wolves; but his friends told him they were at hand, under the curtain of his own tent. A gleam of pleasure shot across his face, and he staggered into the chamber; but when he beheld the body gored with his own hand, and the face, calm indeed, but calm like a pale night without stars, he trembled so, that he would have sunk to the ground but for his supporters.

"O sweet face!" he exclaimed; "thou mayst be calm now; but what is to calm me? O hand that was held up to me in sign of peace and forgiveness! to what have I brought thee? Wretch that I am, I do not even weep. Mine eyes are

as cruel as my hands. My blood shall be shed instead."

And with these words he began tearing off the bandages which the surgeons had put upon him; and he thrust his fingers into his wounds, and would have slain himself thus outright, had not the pain made him faint away.

He was then taken back to his own chamber. Godfrey came in the mean time with the venerable hermit Peter; and when the sufferer awoke, they addressed him in kind words, which even his impatience respected; but it was not to be calmed till the preacher put on the terrors of religion, remonstrating with him as an ingrate to God, and threatening him with the doom of a sinner. The tears then crept into his eyes, and he tried to be patient, and in some degree was so—only breaking out ever and anon, now into exclamations of horror, and now into fond lamentations, talking as if with the shade of his beloved.

Thus lay Tancred for days together, ever woful; till, falling asleep one night towards the dawn, the shade of Clorinda did indeed appear to him, more beautiful than ever, and clad in light and joy. She seemed to stoop and wipe the tears from his eyes; and then said, "Behold how happy I am. Behold me, O beloved friend, and

see how happy, and bright, and beautiful I am; and consider that it is all owing to thyself. 'Twas thou that took'st me out of the false path, and made me worthy of admission among saints and angels. There, in heaven, I love and rejoice; and there I look to see thee in thine appointed time; after which we shall both love the great God and one another for ever and ever. Be faithful, and command thyself, and look to the end; for, lo, as far as it is permitted to a blessed spirit to love mortality, even now I love thee!"

With these words the eyes of the vision grew bright beyond mortal beauty; and then it turned and was hidden in the depth of its radiance, and disappeared.

Tancred slept a quiet sleep; and when he awoke, he gave himself patiently up to the will of the physician; and the remains of Clorinda were gathered into a noble tomb.[1]

[1] This tomb, Tancred says, in an address which he makes to it, "has his flames inside of it, and his tears without:"

"Che dentro hai le mie fiamme, e fuori il pianto." St. 96.

I am loath to disturb the effect of a really touching story; but if I do not occasionally give instances of these conceits, my translations will belie my criticism.

RINALDO AND ARMIDA:

WITH THE

ADVENTURES OF THE ENCHANTED FOREST.

Argument.

PART I.—Satan assembles the fiends in council to consider the best means of opposing the Christians. Armida, the niece of the wizard king of Damascus, is incited to go to their camp under false pretences, and endeavour to weaken it; which she does by seducing away many of the knights, and sowing a discord which ends in the flight of Rinaldo.

PART II.—Armida, after making the knights feel the power of her magic, dismisses them bound prisoners for Damascus. They are rescued on their way by Rinaldo. Armida pursues him in wrath, but falls in love with him.

PART III.—The magician Ismeno succeeds in frightening the Christians in their attempt to cut wood from the Enchanted Forest. Rinaldo is sent for, as the person fated to undo the enchantment.

PART IV.—Rinaldo and Armida, in love with each other, pass their time in a bower of bliss. He is fetched away by two knights, and leaves her in despair.

PART V.—Rinaldo disenchants the forest, and has the chief hand in the taking of Jerusalem. He meets and reconciles Armida.

RINALDO AND ARMIDA,

ETC.

Part the First.

ARMIDA IN THE CHRISTIAN CAMP.

THE Christians had now commenced their attack on Jerusalem, and brought a great rolling tower against the walls, built from the wood of a forest in the neighbourhood; when the Malignant Spirit, who has never ceased his war with Heaven, cast in his mind how he might best defeat their purpose. It was necessary to divide their forces; to destroy their tower; to hinder them from building another; and to make one final triumphant effort against the whole progress of their arms.

Forgetting how the right arm of God could launch its thunderbolts, the Fiend accordingly seated himself on his throne, and ordered his powers to be brought together.

The Tartarean trumpet, with its hoarse voice, called up the dwellers in everlasting darkness. The huge black caverns trembled to their depths, and the blind air rebellowed with the thunder. The bolt does not break forth so horribly when it comes bursting after the flash out of the heavens; nor had the world before ever trembled with such an earthquake.[1]

[1] "Chiama gli abitator' de l' ombre eterne
Il rauco suon de la tartarea tromba.
Treman le spaziose atre caverne,
E l' aer cieco a quel romor rimbomba.
Nè sì stridendo mai da le superne
Regioni del cielo il folgor piomba:
Nè sì scossa già mai trema la terra,
Quando i vapori in sen gravida serra."
Canto iv. st. 3.

The trump of Tartarus, with iron roar,
Called to the dwellers the black regions under:
Hell through its caverns trembled to the core,
And the blind air rebellowed to the thunder:
Never yet fiery bolt more fiercely tore
The crashing firmament, like rocks, asunder;
Nor with so huge a shudder earth's foundations
Shook to their mighty heart, lifting the nations.

The tone of this stanza (suggested otherwise by Vida) was caught from a fine one in Politian, the passage in which about the Nile I ought to have called to mind at page 168.

"Con tal romor, qualor l' aer discorda,
Di Giove il foco d' alta nube piomba:

The gods of the abyss came thronging up on all sides through the gates;—terrible-looking beings with unaccountable aspects, dispensers of death and horror with their eyes;—some stamping with hoofs, some rolling on enormous spires,—their faces human, their hair serpents. There were thousands of shameless Harpies, of pallid Gorgons, of barking Scyllas, of Chimeras that vomited ashes, and of monsters never before heard or thought of, with perverse aspects all mixed up in one.

The Power of Evil sat looking down upon them, huger than a rock in the sea, or an alp with forked summits. A certain horrible majesty augmented the terrors of his aspect. His eyes reddened; his poisonous look hung in the air like a comet; the mouth, as it opened in the midst

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Con tal tumulto, onde la gente assorda,
Da l' alte cataratte il Nil rimbomba:
Con tal orror del Latin sangue ingorda
Sonò Megera la tartarea tromba."
Fragment on the Jousting of Giuliano de' Medici.

Such is the noise, when through his cloudy floor
The bolt of Jove falls on the pale world under;
So shakes the land, where Nile with deafening roar
Plunges his clattering cataracts in thunder;
Horribly so, through Latium's realm of yore,
The trump of Tartarus blew ghastly wonder.

of clouds of beard, seemed an abyss of darkness and blood; and out of it, as from a volcano, issued fires, and vapours, and disgust.

Satan laid forth to his dreadful hearers his old quarrel with Heaven, and its new threats of an extension of its empire. Christendom was to be brought into Asia; their worshippers were to perish; souls were to be rescued from their devices, and Satan's kingdom on earth put an end to. He exhorted them therefore to issue forth once for all and prevent this fatal consummation by the destruction of the Christian forces. Some of the leaders he bade them do their best to disperse, others to slay, others to draw into effeminate pleasures, into rebellion, into the ruin of the whole camp, so that not a vestige might remain of its existence.

The assembly broke up with the noise of hurricanes. They issued forth to look once more upon the stars, and to sow seeds every where of destruction to the Christians. Satan himself followed them, and entered the heart of Hydraotes, king of Damascus.

Hydraotes was a wizard as well as a king, and held the Christians in abhorrence. But he was wise enough to respect their valour; and with Satan's help he discerned the likeliest way

to counteract it. He had a niece, who was the greatest beauty of the age. He had taught her his art: and he concluded, that the enchantments of beauty and magic united would prove irresistible. He therefore disclosed to her his object. He told her that every artifice was lawful, when the intention was to serve one's country and one's faith; and he conjured her to do her utmost to separate Godfrey himself from his army, or in the event of that not being possible, to bring away as many as she could of his noblest captains.

Armida (for that was her name), proud of her beauty, and of the unusual arts that she had acquired, took her way the same evening, alone, and by the most sequestered paths,—a female in gown and tresses issuing forth to conquer an army.[1]

She had not travelled many days ere she came in sight of the Christian camp, the outskirts of which she entered immediately. The Frenchmen all flocked to see her, wondering who she was, and

[1] "La bella Armida, di sua forma altiera,
E de' doni del sesso e de l' etate,
L' impresa prende: e in su la prima sera
Parte, e tiene sol vie chiuse e celate:
E 'n treccia e 'n gonna femminile spera
Vincer popoli invitti e schiere armate."
Canto iv. st. 27.

who could have sent them so lovely a messenger. Armida passed onwards, not with a misgiving air, not with an unalluring, and yet not with an immodest one. Her golden tresses she suffered at one moment to escape from under her veil, and at another she gathered them again within it. Her rosy mouth breathed simplicity as well as voluptuousness. Her bosom was so artfully draped, as to let itself be discerned without seeming to intend it. And thus she passed along, surprising and transporting every body. Coming at length among the tents of the officers, she requested to be shewn that of the leader; and Eustace eagerly stepped forward to conduct her.

Eustace was the younger brother of Godfrey. He had all the ardour of his time of life, and the gallantry, in every respect, of a Frenchman. After paying her a profusion of compliments, and learning that she was a fugitive in distress, he promised her every thing which his brother's authority and his own sword could do for her; and so led her into Godfrey's presence.

The pretended fugitive made a lowly obeisance, and then stood mute and blushing, till the general re-assured her. She then told him, that she was the rightful queen of Damascus, whose throne was usurped by an uncle; that her uncle sought her

death, from which she had been saved by the man who was bribed to inflict it; and that although her creed was Mahometan, she had brought her mind to conclude, that so noble an enemy as Godfrey would take pity on her condition, and permit some of his captains to aid the secret wishes of her people, and seat her on the throne. Ten selected chiefs would overcome, she said, all opposition; and she promised in return to become his grateful and faithful vassal.

The leader of the Christian army sat a while in deliberation. His heart was inclined to befriend the lady, but his prudence was afraid of a Pagan artifice. He thought also that it did not become his piety to turn aside from the enterprise which God had favoured. He therefore gave her a gentle refusal; but added, that should success attend him, and Jerusalem be taken, he would instantly do what she required.

Armida looked down, and wept. A mixture of indignation and despair appeared to seize her; and exclaiming that she had no longer a wish to live, she accused, she said, not a heart so renowned for generosity as his, but Heaven itself which had steeled it against her. What was she to do? She could not remain in his camp. Virgin modesty forbade that. She was not safe out of its bounds.

Her enemies tracked her steps. It was fit that she should die by her own hand.

An indignant pity took possession of the French officers. They wondered how Godfrey could resist the prayers of a creature so beautiful; and Eustace openly, though respectfully, remonstrated. He said, that if ten of the best of his captains could not be spared, ten others might; that it especially became the Christians to redress the wrongs of the innocent; that the death of a tyrant, instead of being a deviation from the service of God, was one of the directest means of performing it; and that France would never endure to hear, that a lady had applied to her knights for assistance, and found her suit refused.

A murmur of approbation followed the words of Eustace. His companions pressed nearer to the general, and warmly urged his request.

Godfrey assented to a wish expressed by so many, but not with perfect goodwill. He bade them remember, that the measure was the result of their own opinion, not his; and concluded by requesting them at all events, for his sake, to moderate the excess of their confidence. The transported warriors had scarcely any answer to make but that of congratulations to the lady. She, on her side, while mischief was rejoicing in her heart,

first expressed her gratitude to all in words intermixed with smiles and tears, and then carried herself towards every one in particular in the manner which she thought most fitted to ensnare. She behaved to this person with cordiality, to that with comparative reserve; to one with phrases only, to another with looks besides, and intimations of secret preference. The ardour of some she repressed, but still in a manner to rekindle it. To others she was all gaiety and attraction; and when others again had their eyes upon her, she would fall into fits of absence, and shed tears, as if in secret, and then look up suddenly and laugh, and put on a cheerful patience. And thus she drew them all into her net.

Yet none of all these men confessed that passion impelled them; every body laid his enthusiasm to the account of honour,—Eustace particularly, because he was most in love. He was also very jealous, especially of the heroical Rinaldo, Prince of Este; and as the squadron of horse to which they both belonged—the greatest in the army—had lately been deprived of its chief, Eustace cast in his mind how he might keep Rinaldo from going with Armida, and at the same time secure his own attendance on her, by advancing him to the vacant post. He offered his services to Rinaldo for the

purpose, not without such emotion as let the hero into his secret; but as the latter had no desire to wait on the lady, he smilingly assented, agreeing at the same time to assist the wishes of the lover. The emissaries of Satan, however, were at work in all quarters. If Eustace was jealous of Rinaldo as a rival in love, Gernando, Prince of Norway, another of the squadron that had lost its chief, was no less so of his gallantry in war, and of his qualifications for being his commander. Gernando was a haughty barbarian, who thought that every sort of pre-eminence was confined to princes of blood royal. He heard of the proposal of Eustace with a disgust that broke into the unworthiest expressions. He even vented it in public, in the open part of the camp, when Rinaldo was standing at no great distance; and the words coming to the hero's ears, and breaking down the tranquillity of his contempt, the latter darted towards him, sword in hand, and defied him to single combat. Gernando beheld death before him, but made a show of valour, and stood on his defence. A thousand swords leaped forth to back him, mixed with as many voices; and half the camp of Godfrey tried to withhold the impetuous youth who was for deciding his quarrel without the general's leave. But the hero's transport was not to be stopped;

he dashed through them all, forced the Norwegian to encounter him, and after a storm of blows that dazzled the man's eyes and took away his senses, ran his sword thrice through the prince's body. He then sent the blade into its sheath reeking as it was, and, taking his way back to his tent, reposed in the calmness of his triumph.

The victor had scarcely gone, when the general arrived on the ground. He beheld the slain Prince of Norway with acute feelings of regret. What was to become of his army, if the leaders thus quarrelled among themselves, and his authority was set at nought? The friends of the slain man increased his anger against Rinaldo, by charging him with all the blame of the catastrophe. The hero's friend, Tancred, assuaged it somewhat by disclosing the truth, and then ventured to ask pardon for the outbreak. But the wise commander shewed so many reasons why such an offence could not be overlooked, and his countenance expressed such a determination to resent it, that the gallant youth hastened secretly to his friend, and urged him to quit the camp till his services should be needed. Rinaldo at first called for his arms, and was bent on resisting every body who came to seize him, had it been even Godfrey himself; but Tancred shewing him how unjust that would be, and

how fatal to the Christian cause, he consented with an ill grace to depart. He would take nobody with him but two squires; and he went away raging with a sense of ill requital for his achievements, but resolving to prove their value by destroying every infidel prince that he could encounter.

Armida now tried in vain to make an impression on the heart of Godfrey. He was insensible to all her devices; but she succeeded in quitting the camp with her ten champions. Lots were drawn to determine who should go; and all who failed to be in the list—Eustace among them—were so jealous of the rest, that at night-time, after the others had been long on the road, they set out to overtake them, each by himself, and all in violation of their soldierly words. The ten opposed them as they came up; but to no purpose. Armida reconciled them all in appearance, by feigning to be devoted to each in secret; and thus she rode on with them many a mile, till she came to a castle on the Dead Sea, where she was accustomed to practise her unfriendliest arts.

Meanwhile news came to Godfrey that his Egyptian enemies were at hand with a great fleet, and that his caravan of provisions had been taken by the robbers of the desert. His army was thus

threatened with ruin from desertion, starvation, and the sword. He maintained a calm and even a cheerful countenance; but in his thoughts he had great anxiety.

Part the Second.

ARMIDA'S HATE AND LOVE.

THE castle to which Armida took her prisoners occupied an island close to the shore in the loathsome Dead Sea. They entered it by means of a narrow bridge; but if their pity had been great at seeing her forced to take refuge in a spot so desolate and repulsive, how pleasingly was it changed into as great a surprise at finding a totally different region within the walls! The gardens were extensive and lovely; the rivulets and fountains as sweet as the flowery thickets they watered; the breezes refreshing, the skies of a sapphire blue, and the birds were singing round about them in the trees. Her riches astonished them no less. The side of the castle that looked on the gardens was all marble and gold; a banquet awaited them beside a water on a shady lawn, consisting of the exquisitest viands on the costliest plate; and a hundred beautiful maidens attended them while they feasted. The enchantress was all smiles and delight; and such was her art, that although she bestowed no favour on any body beyond his ban-

quet and his hopes, every body thought himself the favoured lover.

But no sooner was the feast over, than the greatest and worst of their astonishments ensued. The lady quitted them, saying she should return presently. She did so with a troubled and unfriendly countenance, having a book in one hand, and a little wand in the other. She read in the book in a low voice, and while she was reading shook the little wand; and the guests, altering in every part of their being, and shrinking into minute bodies, felt an inclination, which they obeyed, to plunge into the water beside them. They were fish. In a little while they were again men, looking her in the face with dread and amazement. She had restored them to their humanity. She regarded them with a severe countenance, and said: "You have tasted my power; I can exercise it far more terribly—can put you in dungeons for ever—can turn you to roots in the ground—to flints within the rock. Beware of my wrath, and please me; quit your faiths for mine, and fight against the blasphemer Godfrey."

Every Christian but one rejected her alternative with abhorrence. Him she made one of her champions; the rest were tied and bound, and after being kept a while in a dungeon were sent off as a

present to the King of Egypt, with an escort that came from Damascus to fetch them.

Exulting was left the fair and bigoted magician; but she little guessed what a new fortune awaited them on the road. The discord with which the powers of evil had seconded her endeavours to weaken the Christian camp, had turned in this instance against herself. It had made Rinaldo a wanderer; it had brought his wanderings into this very path; and he now met the prisoners, and bade defiance to the escort. A battle ensued, in which the hero won his accustomed victory. The Christians, receiving the armour of their foes, joyfully took their way back to the camp; and one of the escort, who escaped the slaughter, returned to Armida with news of the deliverance of her captives.

The mortified enchantress took horse and went in pursuit of Rinaldo, with wrath and vengeance in her heart. She tracked him from place to place, till she knew he must arrive on the banks of the Orontes; and there, making a stealthy circuit, she cast a spell, and lay in wait for him in a little island which divided the stream in two.[1]

[1] "That sweet grove
Of Daphne by Orontes." *Parad. Lost*, b. iv.

It was famous for the most luxurious worship of antiquity. Vide Gibbon, vol. iii. p. 198.

Rinaldo came up with his squires; he beheld on the bank a pillar of white marble, and beside it on the water a little boat. The pillar presented an inscription, inviting travellers to cross to the island and behold a wonder of the world. The hero accepted the invitation; but as the boat was too small to hold more than one person, and the circumstance probably an appeal to his courage, he bade his squires wait for him, and proceeded by himself.

On reaching the island and casting his eyes eagerly round about, the adventurer could discern nothing but trees and grottos, flowers and grass, and water. He thought himself trifled with; but as the spot was beautiful and refreshing, he took off his helmet, resolving to stay a little and repose. He crossed to the farther side of the island, and lay down on the river-side. On a sudden he observed the water bubble and gurgle in a manner that was very strange; and presently the top of a head arose with beautiful hair, then the face of a damsel, then the bosom. The fair creature stood half out of the stream, and warbled a song so luxurious and so lulling, that the little wind there was seemed to fall in order to listen; and the young warrior was so drowsed with the sweetness, that languor crept through all his senses, and he slept.

Armida came from out a thicket and looked on him. She had resolved that he should perish.

But when she saw how placidly he breathed, and what an intimation of beautiful eyes there was in his very eyelids, she hung over him, still looking.

In a little while she sat down by his side, always looking. She hung over him as Narcissus did over the water, and indignation melted out of her heart. She cooled his face with her veil; she made a fan of it; she gave herself up to the worship of those hidden eyes. Of an enemy she became a lover.[1]

Armida gathered trails of roses and lilies from the thickets around her, and cast a spell on them, and made bands with which she fettered his sleeping limbs; and then she called her nymphs, and they put him into her car, and she went away with him through the air far off, even to one of the Fortunate Islands in the great ocean, where her jealousy, assisted by her art, would be in dread of no visitors, no discovery. She bore him to the top of a mountain, and cast a spell about the mountain, to make the top lovely and the sides inacces-

[1] I omit a point about "fires" of love, and "ices" of the heart; and I will here observe, once for all, that I omit many such in these versions of Tasso, for the reason given in the Preface.

sible. She put shapes of wild beasts and monsters in the woods of the lowest region, and heaps of ice in the second, and alluring and betraying shapes and enchantments towards the summit; and round the summit she put walls and labyrinths of inextricable error; and in the heart of these was a palace by a lake, and the loveliest of gardens.

Here Rinaldo was awaked by love and beauty; and here for the present he is left.

Part the Third.

THE TERRORS OF THE ENCHANTED FOREST.

MEANTIME the siege of the Holy City had gone on, with various success on either side, but chiefly to the loss of the Christians. The machinations of Satan were prevailing. Rinaldo, in his absence, was thought to have been slain by the contrivance of Godfrey, which nearly produced a revolt of the forces. Godfrey was himself wounded in battle by Clorinda: and now the great wooden tower was burnt, and Clorinda slain in consequence (as you have heard in another place), which oppressed the courage of Tancred with melancholy.

On the other hand, the Powers of Evil were far from being as prosperous as they wished. They had lost the soul of Clorinda. They had seen Godfrey healed by a secret messenger from Heaven, who dropt celestial balsam into his wound. They had seen the return of Armida's prisoners, who had arrived just in time to change the fortune of a battle, and drive the Pagans back within their walls. And worse than all, they had

again felt the arm of St. Michael, who had threatened them with worse consequences if they reappeared in the contest.

The fiends, however, had colleagues on earth, who plotted for them meanwhile. The Christians had set about making another tower; but in this proceeding they were thwarted by the enchanter Ismeno, who cast his spells to better purpose this time than he had done in the affair of the stolen image. The forest in which the Christians obtained wood for these engines lay in a solitary valley, not far from the camp. It was very old, dark, and intricate; and had already an evil fame as the haunt of impure spirits. No shepherd ever took his flock there; no Pagan would cut a bough from it; no traveller approached it, unless he had lost his way: he made a large circuit to avoid it, and pointed it out anxiously to his companions.

The necessity of the Christians compelled them to defy this evil repute of the forest; and Ismeno hastened to oppose them. He drew his line, and uttered his incantations, and called on the spirits whom St. Michael had rebuked, bidding them come and take charge of the forest—every one of his tree, as a soul of its body. The spirits delayed at first, not only for dread of the great angel, but because they resented the biddings of

mortality, even in their own cause. The magician, however, persisted; and his spells becoming too powerful to be withstood, presently they came pouring in by myriads, occupying the whole place, and rendering the very approach to it a task of fear and labour. The first party of men that came to cut wood were unable to advance when they beheld the trees, but turned like children, and became the mockery of the camp. Godfrey sent them back, with a chosen squadron to animate them to the work; but the squadron themselves, however boldly they affected to proceed, had no sooner approached the spot, than they found reason to forgive the fears of the woodcutters. The earth shook; a great wind began rising, with a sound of waters; and presently, every dreadful noise ever heard by man seemed mingled into one, and advancing to meet them—roarings of lions, hissings of serpents, pealings and rolls of thunder. The squadron went back to Godfrey, and plainly confessed that it had not courage enough to enter such a place.

A leader, of the name of Alcasto, shook his head at this candour with a contemptuous smile. He was a man of the stupider sort of courage, without mind enough to conceive danger. "Pretty soldiers," exclaimed he, "to be afraid of noises and

sights! Give the duty to me. Nothing shall stop Alcasto, though the place be the mouth of hell."

Alcasto went; and he went farther than the rest, and the trembling woodcutters once more prepared their axes; but, on a sudden, there sprang up between them and the trees a wall of fire which girded the whole forest. It had glowing battlements and towers; and on these there appeared armed spirits, with the strangest and most bewildering aspects. Alcasto retired—slowly indeed, but with shame and terror; nor had he the courage to re-appear before his commander. Godfrey had him brought, but could hardly get a word from his lips. The man talked like one in a dream.

At last Tancred went. He would have gone before; but he had neither thought the task so difficult, nor did he care for any thing that was going forward. His mind was occupied with the dead Clorinda. He had now work that aroused him; and he set out in good earnest for the forest, not unmoved in his imagination, but resolved to defy all appearances.

Arrived at the wall of fire, Tancred halted a moment, and looked up at the visages on its battlements, not without alarm. Many reflections passed swiftly through his mind, some urging him

forward, others withholding; but he concluded with stepping right through the fire. It did not resist him: he did not feel it.

The fire vanished; and, in its stead, there poured down a storm of hail and rain, black as midnight. This vanished also.

Tancred stood amazed for an instant, and then passed on. He was soon in the thick of the wood, and for some time made his way with difficulty. On a sudden, he issued forth into a large open glade, like an amphitheatre, in which there was nothing but a cypress-tree that stood in the middlë. The cypress was marked with hieroglyphical characters, mixed with some words in the Syrian tongue which he could read; and these words requested the stranger to spare the fated place, nor trouble the departed souls who were there shut up in the trees. Meantime the wind was constantly moaning around it; and in the moaning was a sound of human sighs and tears!

Tancred's heart, for a moment, was overcome with awe and pity; but recollecting himself, and resolving to make amends for his credulity, he smote with all his might at the cypress. The blow, wonderful to see, produced an effusion of blood, which dyed the grass about the root. Tancred's hair stood on end. He smote, however,

again, with double violence, resolving to see the end of the marvel; and then he heard a woful voice issuing as from a tomb.

"Hast thou not hurt me," it said, "Tancred, enough already? Hast thou slain the human body which I once joyfully inhabited; and now must thou cut and rend me, even in this wretched enclosure? My name was Clorinda. Every tree which thou beholdest is the habitation of some Christian or Pagan soul; for all come hither that are slain beneath the walls of the city, compelled by I know not what power, or for what reason. Every bough in the forest is alive; and when thou cuttest down a tree, thou slayest a soul."

As a sick man in a dream thinks, and yet thinks not, that he sees some dreadful monster, and, notwithstanding his doubt, wishes to fly from the horrible perplexity; so the trembling lover, though suspecting what he beheld, had so frightful an image before his thoughts of Clorinda weeping and wailing after death, and bleeding in her very soul, that he had not the heart to do more, or to remain in the place. He returned in bewildered sorrow to Godfrey, and told him all. "It is not in my power," he said, "to touch another bough of that forest."[1]

[1] In the original, an impetuous gust of wind carries away the

The astonished leader of the Christians now made up his mind to go himself; and so, with prayer and valour united, bring this appalling adventure to some conclusion. But the hermit Peter dissuaded him. The holy man, in an ecstacy of foreknowledge, beheld the coming of the only champion fated to conclude it; and Godfrey himself the same night had a vision from heaven, bidding him grant the petition of those who should sue him next day for the recall of Rinaldo from exile—Rinaldo, the right hand of the army, as Godfrey was its head.

The petition was made as soon as daylight appeared; and two knights, Carlo and Ubaldo, were despatched in search of the fated hero.

sword of Tancred; a circumstance which I mention because Collins admired it (see his Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands). I confess I cannot do so. It seems to me quite superfluous; and when the reader finds the sword conveniently lying for the hero outside the wood, as he returns, the effect is childish and pantomimic. If the magician wished him not to fight any more, why should he give him the sword back? And if it was meant as a present to him from Clorinda, what gave her the power to make the present? Tasso retained both the particulars in the *Gerusalemme Conquistata.*

Part the Fourth.

THE LOVES OF RINALDO AND ARMIDA.

The knights, with information procured on the road from a good wizard, struck off for the sea-coast, and embarking in a pinnace which miraculously awaited them, sailed along the shores of the Mediterranean for the retreat of Armida. They saw the Egyptian army assembled at Gaza, but hoped to return with Rinaldo before it could effect anything at Jerusalem. They passed the mouths of the Nile, and Alexandria, and Cyrene, and Ptolemais, and the cities of the Moors, and the dangers of the Greater and Lesser Whirlpools, and their pilot shewed them the spot where Carthage stood,—Carthage, now a dead city, whose grave is scarcely discernible. For cities die; kingdoms die;—a little sand and grass covers all that was once lofty in them and glorious. And yet man, forsooth, disdains that he is mortal! Oh, mind of ours, inordinate and proud![1]

[1] "Giace l' alta Cartago: appena i segni
De l' alte sue ruine il lido serba.

After looking towards the site of Carthage, they passed Algiers, and Oran, and Tingitana, and beheld the opposite coast of Spain, and then they cleared the narrow sea of Gibraltar, and

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Muoiono le città: muoiono i regni:
Copre i fasti e le pompe arena ed erba:
E l' uom d' esser mortal par che si sdegni.
Oh nostra mente cupida e superba!"

Canto xv. st. 20.

Great Carthage is laid low. Scarcely can eye
Trace where she stood with all her mighty crowd:
For cities die; kingdoms and nations die;
A little sand and grass is all their shroud;
Yet mortal man disdains mortality!
O mind of ours, inordinate and proud!

Very fine is this stanza of Tasso; and yet, like some of the finest writing of Gray, it is scarcely more than a cento. The commentators call it a "beautiful imitation" of a passage in Sannazzaro; and it is; but the passage in Sannazzaro is also beautiful. It contains not only the "Giace Cartago," and the "appena i segni," &c., but the contrast of the pride with the mortality of man, and, above all, the "dying" of the cities, which is the finest thing in the stanza of its imitator.

"Qua devictæ Carthaginis arces
Procubuere, jacentque infausto in littore turres
Eversæ; quantum ille metus, quantum illa laborum
Urbs dedit insultans Latio et Laurentibus arvis!
Nunc passim vix reliquias, vix nomina servans,
Obruitur propriis non agnoscenda ruinis.

came out into the immeasurable ocean, leaving all sight of land behind them; and so speeding ever onward in the billows, they beheld at last a cluster of mountainous and beautiful islands; the larger ones inhabited by a simple people, the smaller quite wild and desolate. So at least they

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Et querimur genus infelix, humana labare
Membra ævo, cum regna palam moriantur et urbes."
De Partu Virginis, lib. ii.

The commentators trace the conclusion of this passage to Dante, where he says that it is no wonder families perish, when cities themselves "have their terminations" (termin hanno): but though there is a like germ of thought in Dante, the mournful flower of it, the word "death," is not there. It was evidently suggested by a passage (also pointed out by the commentators) in the consolatory letter of Sulpicius to Cicero, on the death of his daughter Tullia; —"Heu nos homunculi indignamur, si quis nostrum interiit, aut occisus est, quorum vita brevior esse debet, cum uno loco tot oppidorum cadavera projecta jaceant." (Alas! we poor human creatures are indignant if any one of us dies or is slain, frail as are the materials of which we are constituted; and yet we can see, lying together in one place, the dead bodies of I know not how many cities!). The music of Tasso's line was indebted to one in Petrarch's *Trionfo del Tempo*, v. 112:

"Passan le signorie, passano i regni;"

and the fine concluding verse, "Oh nostra mente," to another perhaps in his *Trionfo della Divinità*, v. 61, not without a recollection of Lucretius, lib. ii. v. 14:

"O miseras hominum menteis! o pectora cæca!"

appeared. But in one of these smaller islands was the mountain, on the top of which, in the indulgence of every lawless pleasure, lay the champion of the Christian faith. This the pilot shewed to the two knights, and then steered the pinnace into its bay; and here, after a voyage of four days and nights, it dropped its sails without need of anchor, so mild and sheltered was the port, with natural moles curving towards the entrance, and evergreen woods overhead.

It was evening, with a beautiful sunset. The knights took leave of the pilot, and setting out instantly on their journey, well furnished with all advices how to proceed, slept that night at the foot of the mountain; for they were not to begin to scale it till sunrise. With the first beams of the sun they arose and ascended. They had not climbed far, when a serpent rushed out upon the path, entirely stopping it, but fled at the sound of a slender rod, which Ubaldo whisked as he advanced. A lion, for all his cavernous jaws, did the same; nor was greater resistance made by a whole herd of monsters. They now mounted with great labour the region of ice and snow; but, at the top of it, emerged from winter-time into summer. The air was full of sweet odours, yet fresh; they sauntered (for they could not walk

fast) over a velvet sward, under trees, by the side of a shady river; and a bewitching pleasure began to invite their senses. But they knew the river, and bore in mind their duty. It was called the River of Laughter.[1] A little way on, increasing in beauty as it went, it formed a lucid pool in a dell; and by the side of this pool was a table spread with every delicacy, and in the midst of it two bathing damsels, talking and laughing. Sometimes they sprinkled one another, then dived, then partly came up without shewing their faces, then played a hundred tricks, pretending all the while not to see the travellers. Then they became quiet, and sunk gently; and, as they reappeared, one of them rose half into sight, sweetly as the morning star when it issues from the water, dewy and dropping, or as Venus herself arose out of the froth of the sea. Such looked this damsel, and so did the crystal moisture go dropping from her tresses. Then she turned her eyes towards the travellers, and feigning to behold them for the first time, shrunk within herself. She hastened to undo the knot in which her tresses were tied up, and shook them round about her, and down

[1] A fountain which caused laughter that killed people is in Pomponius Mela's account of the Fortunate Islands; and was the origin of that of Boiardo; as I ought to have noticed in the place.

they fell to the water thick and long, enclosing that beautiful sight; and yet the enclosure itself was not less beautiful. So, hid in the pool below, and in her tresses above, she glanced at the knights through her hair, with a blushing gladness. She blushed and she laughed at the same time; and the blushing was more beautiful for the laughter, and the laughter for the blushing; and then she said, in a voice which would alone have conquered any other hearers, "You are very happy to be allowed to come to this place. Nothing but delight is here. Our queen must have chosen you from a great number. But be pleased first to rid you of the dust of your journey, and to refresh yourselves at this table."

So spake the one; and the other accompanied her speech with accordant looks and gestures, as the dance accompanies the music.

Nor was the allurement unfelt.

But the companions passed on, taking no notice; and the bathers went stillenly under the water.[1]

[1] All this description of the females bathing is in the highest taste of the voluptuous; particularly the latter part:

"Qual mattutina stella esce de l' onde
Rugiadosa e stillante: o come fuore
Spuntò nascendo già da le feconde
Spume de l' oceàn la Dea d' Amore:

The knights passed through the gates of the park of Armida, and entered a labyrinth made with contrivance the most intricate. Here their

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Tale apparve costei: tal le sue bionde
Chiome stillavan cristallino umore.
Poi girò gli occhi, e pur allor s' infinse
Que' duo vedere, e in se tutta si strinse:
E 'l crin che 'n cima al capo avea raccolto
In un sol nodo, immantinente sciolse;
Che lunghissimo in giù cadendo, e folto,
D' un aureo manto i molli avori involse.
Oh che vago spettacolo è lor tolto!
Ma mon men vago fu chi loro il tolse.
Così da l' acque e da capelli ascosa,
A lor si volse, lieta e vergognosa.
Rideva insieme, e insieme ella arrossia;
Ed era nel rossor più bello il riso,
E nel riso il rossor, che le copria
Insino al mento il delicato viso."

Canto xv. st. 60.

Spenser, among the other obligations which it delighted him to owe to this part of Tasso's poem, has translated these last twelve lines:

"With that the other likewise up arose,
And her fair locks, which formerly were bound
Up in one knot, she low adown did loose,
Which, flowing long and thick, her cloth'd around,
And th' ivory in golden mantle gown'd:
So that fair spectacle from him was reft;
Yet that which reft it, no less fair was found.

path would have been lost, but for a map traced by one who knew the secret. By the help of this they threaded it in safety, and issued upon a garden beautiful beyond conception. Every thing that could be desired in gardens was presented to their eyes in one landscape, and yet without contradiction or confusion,—flowers, fruits, water, sunny hills, descending woods, retreats into corners and grottos: and what put the last loveliness upon

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So hid in locks and waves from looker's theft,
Nought but her lovely face she for his looking left.

Withal she laughèd, and she blush'd withal;
That blushing to her laughter gave more grace,
And laughter to her blushing."

Fairy Queen, book ii. canto 12, st. 67.

Tasso's translator, Fairfax, worthy both of his original and of Spenser, has had the latter before him in his version of the passage, not without a charming addition of his own at the close of the first stanza:

" And her fair locks, that in a knot were tied
High on her crown, she 'gan at large unfold;
Which falling long and thick, and spreading wide,
The ivory soft and white mantled in gold:
Thus her fair skin the dame would clothe and hide;
And that which hid it, no less fair was hold.
Thus clad in waves and locks, her eyes divine
From them ashamed would she turn and twine.

Withal she smilèd, and she blush'd withal;
Her blush her smiling, smiles her blushing graced."

the scene was, that the art which did it all was no where discernible.[1] You might have supposed (so exquisitely was the wild and the cultivated united) that all had somehow happened, not been contrived. It seemed to be the art of Nature herself; as though, in a fit of playfulness, she had imitated her imitator. But the temperature of the place, if nothing else, was plainly the work of magic, for blossoms and fruit abounded at the same time. The ripe and the budding fig grew on the same bough; green apples were clustered upon those with red cheeks; the vines in one place had small leaves and hard little grapes, and in the next

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[1] "E quel che 'l bello e 'l caro accresce a l' opre,
L' arte, che tutto fa, nulla si scopre.

Stimi (si misto il culto è col negletto)
Sol naturali e gli ornamenti e i siti.
Di natura arte par, che per diletto
L' imitatrice sua scherzando imiti."

The idea of Nature imitating Art, and playfully imitating her, is in Ovid; but that of a mixture of cultivation and wildness is, as far as I am aware, Tasso's own. It gives him the honour of having been the first to suggest the picturesque principle of modern gardening; as I ought to have remembered, when assigning it to Spenser in a late publication (*Imagination and Fancy*, p. 109). I should have noticed also, in the same work, the obligations of Spenser to the Italian poet for the passage before quoted about the nymph in the water.

they laid forth their richest tapestry in the sun, heavy with bunches full of wine. At one time you listened to the warbling of birds; and a minute after, as if they had stopped on purpose, nothing was heard but the whispering of winds and the fall of waters. It seemed as if every thing in the place contributed to the harmony and the sweetness. The notes of the turtle-dove were deeper here than any where else; the hard oak, and the chaste laurel, and the whole exuberant family of trees, the earth, the water, every element of creation, seemed to have been compounded but for one object, and to breathe forth the fulness of its bliss.[1]

[1] "Par che la dura quercia e 'l casto alloro,
E tutta la frondosa ampia famiglia,
Par che la terra e l' acqua e formi e spiri
Dolcissimi d' amor sensi e sospiri."
St. 16.

Fairfax in this passage is very graceful and happy (in the first part of his stanza he is speaking of a bird that sings with a human voice—which I have omitted):

"She ceased: and as approving all she spoke,
The choir of birds their heavenly tunes renew;
The turtles sigh'd, and sighs with kisses broke;
The fowls to shades unseen by pairs withdrew;
It seem'd the laurel chaste and stubborn oak,
And all the gentle trees on earth that grew,
It seem'd the land, the sea, and heaven above,
All breath'd out fancy sweet, and sigh'd out love."

The two messengers, hardening their souls with all their might against the enchanting impression, moved forward silently among the trees; till, looking through the branches into a little opening which formed a bower, they saw—or did they but think they saw?—no, they saw indeed the hero and his Armida reclining on the grass.[1] Her dress was careless, her hair loose in the summer-wind. His head lay in her bosom; a smile trembled on her lips and in her eyes, like a sunbeam in water; and as she thus looked on him with passionate love, he looked up at her, face to face, and returned it with all his soul.

Now she kissed his lips, now his eyes; and then they looked again at one another with their ever-hungry looks; and then she kissed him again, and he gave a sigh so deep you would have thought his soul had gone out of him, and passed into hers. The two warriors from their covert gazed on the loving scene.

At the lover's side there hung a strange accoutrement for a warrior, namely, a crystal mirror. He rose a little on his elbow, and gave it into Armida's hands: and in two different objects each

[1] "Ecco tra fronde e fronde il guardo avante
Penetra, e vede, o pargli di vedere,
Vede per certo," &c. St. 17.

beheld but one emotion, she hers in the glass, and he his own in her eyes. But he would not suffer her to look long at any thing but himself; and then they spake loving and adoring words; and after a while Armida bound up her hair, and put some flowers into it, as jewels might be put upon gold, and added a rose or two to the lilies of her bosom, and adjusted her veil. And never did peacock look so proudly beautiful when he displays the pomp of his eyed plumes; nor was ever the rainbow so sweetly coloured when it curves forth its dewy bosom against the light.[1] But lovely above all was the effect of a magic girdle which the enchantress had made with her whole art, and which she never laid aside day or night. Spirit in it had taken substance; the subtlest emotions of the soul a shape and palpability. Tender disdains were in it, and repulses that attracted, and levities that endeared, and contentments full of joy, and smiles, and little words, and drops of delicious tears, and short-coming

[1] The line about the peacock,

"Spiega la pompa de l' occhiute piume,"

Opens wide the pomp of his eyed plumes,

was such a favourite with Tasso, that he has repeated it from the *Aminta*, and (I think) in some other place, but I cannot call it to mind.

sighs, and soft kisses. All these she had mingled together, and made one delight out of many, and wound it about her heart, and wore it for a charm irresistible.[1]

And now she kissed him once more, and begged leave of a little absence (for love is courteous ever), and so went as usual to her books and her magic arts. Rinaldo remained where he was, for he had no power to wish himself out of the sweet spot; only he would stray a while among the trees, and amuse himself with the birds and squirrels, and so be a loving hermit till she returned. And at night they retired under one roof, still in the midst of the garden.

[1] "Teneri sdegni, e placide e tranquille
Repulse, e cari vezzi, e liete paci,
Sorrisi, e parolette, e dolci stille
Di pianto, e sospir' tronchi, e molli baci." St. 5

This is the *cestus* in Homer, which Venus lends to Juno for the purpose of enchanting Jupiter:

Η, και απο στηθεσφιν ελυσατο κεστον ἱμαντα
Ποικιλον· ενθα δε οἱ θελκτηρια παντα τετυκτο·
Ενθ' ἐνι μεν φιλοτης, εν δ' ἱμερος, εν δ' οαριστυς,
Παρφασις, ἡ τ' εκλεψε νοον πυκα περ φρονεοντων.
Iliad, lib. xiv. 214.

She said; and from her balmy bosom loosed
The girdle that contained all temptingness —
Love, and desire, and sweet and secret talk
Lavish, which robs the wisest of their wits.

But no sooner had Armida gone, than the two warriors issued from their hiding-place, and stood before the lover, glittering in their noble arms.

As a war-horse, that has been taken from the wars, and become the luxurious husband of the stud, wanders among the drove in the meadows in vile enjoyment; should by chance a trumpet be heard in the place, or a dazzling battle-axe become visible, he turns towards it on the instant, and neighs, and longs to be in the lists, and vehemently desires the rider on his back who is to dash and be dashed at in the encounter;—even so turned the young hero when the light of the armour flashed upon him, even so longed for the war, even so shook himself up out of his bed of pleasure, with all his great qualities awaked and eager.

Ubaldo saw the movement in his heart, and held right in his face the shield of adamant, which had been brought for the purpose. It was a mirror that shewed to the eyes of every one who looked into it the very man as he was.

But when Rinaldo beheld himself indeed,—when he read his transformation, not in the flattering glass of the enchantress, but by the light of this true, and simple, and severe reflector,—his hair tricked out with flowers and unguents,

his soft mantle of exquisitest dye, and his very sword rendered undistinguishable for what it was by a garland,—shame and remorse fell upon him. He felt indeed like a dreamer come to himself. He looked down. He could not speak. He wished to hide himself in the bottom of the sea.

Ubaldo raised his voice and spoke. "All Europe and Asia," said he, "are in arms. Whoever desires fame, or is a worshipper of his Saviour, is a fighter in the land of Syria. Thou only, O son of Bertoldo, remainest out of the high way of renown—in luxury—in a little corner; thou only, unmoved with the movement of the world, the champion of a girl. What dream, what lethargy can have drowned a valour like thine? What vileness have had attraction for thee? Up, up, and with us. The camp, the commander himself calls for thee; fortune and victory await thee. Come, fated warrior, and finish thy work; see the false creed which thou hast shaken, laid low beneath thy inevitable sword."

On hearing these words the noble youth remained for a time without speaking, without moving. At length shame gave way to a passionate sense of his duty. With a new fire in his cheeks, he tore away the effeminate ornaments of his servitude, and quitted the spot without a word.

In a few moments he had threaded the labyrinth: he was outside the gate. Ere long he was descending the mountain.

But meantime Armida had received news of the two visitors; and coming to look for them, and casting her eyes down the steep, she beheld —with his face, alas, turned no longer towards her own—the hasty steps of her hero between his companions. She wished to cry aloud, but was unable. She might have resorted to some of her magic devices, but her heart forbade her. She ran, however—for what cared she for dignity?—she ran down the mountain, hoping still by her beauty and her tears to arrest the fugitive; but his feet were too strong, even for love: she did not reach him till he had arrived on the sea-shore. Where was her pride now? where the scorn she had exhibited to so many suitors? where her coquetry and her self-sufficiency—her love of being loved, with the power to hate the lover? The enchantress was now taught what the passion was, in all its depair as well as delight. She cried aloud. She cared not for the presence of the messengers. "Oh, go not, Rinaldo," she cried; "go not, or take me with thee. My heart is torn to pieces. Take me, or turn and kill me. Stop, at least, and be cruel to me here. If thou hast

the heart to fly me, it will not be hard to thee to stay and be unkind."

Even the messengers were moved at this, or seemed to be moved. Ubaldo told the fugitive that it would be heroical in him to wait and hear what the lady had to say, with gentleness and firmness. His conquest over himself would then be complete.

Rinaldo stopped, and Armida came up breathless and in tears—lovelier than ever. She looked earnestly at him at first, without a word. He gave her but a glance, and looked aside.

As a fine singer, before he lets loose his tongue in the lofty utterance of his emotion, prepares the minds of his hearers with some sweet prelude, exquisitely modulating in a lower tone,—so the enchantress, whose anguish had not deprived her of all sense of her art, breathed a few sighs to dispose the soul of her idol to listen, and then said: "I do not beg thee to hear me as one that loves me. We both loved once; but that is over. I beg thee to hear, even though as one that loves me not. It will cost thy disdain nothing to grant me that. Perhaps thou hast discovered a pleasure in hating me. Do so. I come not to deprive thee of it. If it seem just to thee, just let it be. I too once hated. I hated the Christians—hated even thyself. I thought it right to do so: I was bred

up to think it. I pursued thee to do thee mischief; I overtook thee; I bore thee away; and worse than all—for now perhaps thou loathest me for it—I loved thee. I loved thee, for the first time that I loved any one; nay, I made thee love me in turn; and, alas, I gave myself into thine arms. It was wrong. I was foolish; I was wicked. I grant that I have deserved thou shouldst think ill of me, that thou shouldst punish me, and quit me, and hate to have any remembrance of this place which I had filled with delights. Go; pass over the seas; make war against my friends and my country; destroy us all, and the religion we believe in. Alas! '*we*' do I say? The religion is mine no longer—O thou, the cruel idol of my soul. Oh, let me go with thee, if it be but as thy servant, thy slave. Let the conqueror take with him his captive; let her be mocked; let her be pointed at; only let her be with thee. I will cut off these tresses, which no longer please thee: I will clothe myself in other attire, and go with thee into the battle. I have courage and strength enough to bear thy lance, to lead thy spare-horse, to be, above all, thy shield-bearer—thy shield. Nothing shall touch thee but through me—through this bosom, Rinaldo. Perhaps mischance may spare thee for its sake. Not a word? not a little word?

Do I dare to boast of what thou hadst once a kind word for, though now thou wilt neither look upon me nor speak to me?"

She could say no more: her words were suffocated by a torrent of tears. But she sought to take his hand, to arrest him by his mantle—in vain. He could scarcely, it is true, restrain his tears: but he did. He looked sorrowful, but composed; and at length he said: "Armida, would I could do as thou wishest; but I cannot. I would relieve thee instantly of all this tumult of emotion. No hate is there in him that must quit thee; no such disdain as thou fanciest; nothing but the melancholy and impetuous sense of his duty. Thou hast erred, it is true—erred both in love and hate; but have I not erred with thee? and can I find excuse which is not found for thyself? Dear and honoured ever wilt thou be with Rinaldo, whether in joy or sorrow. Count me, if it please thee, thy champion still, as far as my country and my faith permit; but here, in this spot, must be buried all else—buried, not for my sake only, but for that of thy beauty, thy worthiness, thy royal blood. Consent to disparage thyself no longer. Peace be with thee. I go where I have no permission to take thee with me. Be happy; be wise."

While Rinaldo was speaking in this manner, Armida changed colour; her bosom heaved; her eyes took a new kind of fire; scorn rose upon her lip. When he finished, she looked at him with a bitterness that rejected every word he had said; and then she exclaimed: "Thou hast no such blood in thine own veins as thou canst fear to degrade. Thy boasted descent is a fiction: base, and brutish, and insensible was thy stock. What being of gentle blood could quit a love like mine without even a tear—a sigh? What but the mockery of a man could call me his, and yet leave me? vouchsafe me his pardon, as if I had offended him? excuse my guilt and my tenderness; he, the sage of virtue, and me, the wretch! O God! and these are the men that take upon them to slaughter the innocent, and dictate faiths to the world! Go, hard heart, with such peace as thou leavest in this bosom. Begone; take thine injustice from my sight for ever. My spirit will follow thee, not as a help, but as a retribution. I shall die first, and thou wilt die speedily: thou wilt perish in the battle. Thou wilt lie expiring among the dead and bleeding, and wilt call on Armida in thy last moments, and I shall hear it—yes, I shall hear it; I shall look for that."

Down fell Armida on the ground, senseless;

and Rinaldo stood over her, weeping at last. Open thine eyes, poor wretch, and see him. Alas, the heavens deny thee the consolation! What will he do? Will he leave thee lying there betwixt dead and alive? Or will he go—pitying thee, but still going? He goes; he is gone; he is in the bark, and the wind is in the sail; and he looks back —ever back; but still goes: the shore begins to be out of sight.

Armida woke, and was alone. She raved again, but it was for vengeance. In a few days she was with the Egyptian army, a queen at the head of her vassals, going against the Christians at Jerusalem.

Part the Fifth.

THE DISENCHANTMENT OF THE FOREST, AND THE TAKING OF JERUSALEM, &c.

RINALDO arrived without loss of time in the Christian camp before Jerusalem. Every body rejoiced to see the right hand of the army. Godfrey gladly pardoned him; the hermit Peter blessed him; he himself retired to beg the forgiveness and favour of Heaven; and then he went straight to the Enchanted Forest.

It was a beautiful morning, and the forest, instead of presenting its usual terrors, appeared to him singularly tranquil and pleasing. On entering it he heard, not dreadful thunder-claps, but harmonies made up of all sorts of gentle and lovely sounds — brooks, whispering winds, nightingales, organs, harps, human voices. He went slowly and cautiously, and soon came to a beautiful river which encircled the heart of the wood. A bridge of gold carried him over. He had no sooner crossed it, than the river higher up suddenly swelled and

rushed like a torrent, sweeping the bridge away. The harmony meanwhile had become silent. Admiring, but nothing daunted, the hero went on.

Every thing as he advanced appeared to start into fresh beauty. His steps produced lilies and roses; here leaped up a fountain, and there came falling a cascade; the wood itself seemed to grow young as with sudden spring; and he again heard the music and the human voices, though he could see no one.

Passing through the trees, he came into a glade in the heart of the wood, in the centre of which he beheld a myrtle-tree, the largest and most beautiful ever seen: it was taller than a cypress or palm, and seemed the queen of the forest. Looking around him, he observed to his astonishment an oak suddenly cleave itself open, and out of it there came a nymph. A hundred other trees did the same, giving birth to as many nymphs. They were all habited as we see them in theatres; only, instead of bows and arrows, each held a lute or guitar. Coming towards the hero with joyful eyes, they formed a circle about him, and danced; and in their dancing they sang, and bade him welcome to the haunt of their mistress, their loving mistress, of whom he was the only hope and joy. Looking as they spoke towards the myrtle, Ri-

naldo looked also, and beheld, issuing out of it—Armida.

Armida came sweetly towards him, with a countenance at once grieving and rejoicing, but expressing above all infinite affection. "And do I indeed see thee again?" she said; "and wilt thou not fly me a second time? am I visited to be consoled, or to be treated again as an enemy? is poor Armida so formidable, that thou must needs close up thine helmet when thou beholdest her? Thou mightest surely have vouchsafed her once more a sight of thine eyes. Let us be friends, at least, if we may be nothing more. Wilt thou not take her hand?"

Rinaldo's answer was, to turn away as from a cheat, to look towards the myrtle-tree, to draw his sword, and proceed with manifest intentions of assailing it. She ran before him shrieking, and hugged it round. "Nay, thou wilt not," she said, "thou wilt not hurt my tree—not cut and slay what is bound up with the life of Armida? Thy sword must pass first through her bosom."

Armida writhed and wailed; Rinaldo nevertheless raised his sword, and it was coming against the tree, when her shape, like a thing in a dream, was metamorphosed as quick as lightning. It became a giant, a Briareus, wielding a hundred

swords, and speaking in a voice of thunder. Every one of the nymphs at the same instant became a Cyclops; tempest and earthquake ensued, and the air was full of ghastly spectres.

" Rinaldo again raised his arm with a more vehement will; he struck, and at the same instant every horror disappeared. The sky was cloudless; the forest was neither terrible nor beautiful, but heavy and sombre as of old—a natural gloomy wood, but no prodigy.

Rinaldo returned to the camp, his aspect that of a conqueror; the silver wings of his crest, the white eagle, glittering in the sun. The hermit Peter came forward to greet him; a shout was sent up by the whole camp; Godfrey gave him high reception; nobody envied him. Workmen, no longer trembling, were sent to the forest to cut wood for the machines of war; and the tower was rebuilt, together with battering-rams and balistas, and catapults, most of them an addition to what they had before. The tower also was now clothed with bulls-hides, as a security against being set on fire; and a bridge was added to the tower, from which the besiegers could at once step on the city-walls.

With these long-desired invigorations of his strength, the commander of the army lost no time

in making a general assault on Jerusalem; for a dove, supernaturally pursued by a falcon, had brought him letters intended for the besieged, informing them, that if they could only hold out four days longer, their Egyptian allies would be at hand. The Pagans beheld with dismay the resuscitated tower, and all the new engines coming against them. They fought valiantly; but Rinaldo and Godfrey prevailed. The former was the first to scale the walls, the latter to plant his standard from the bridge. The city was entered on all sides, and the enemy driven, first into Solomon's Temple, and then into the Citadel, or Tower of David. Before the assault, Godfrey had been vouchsafed a sight of armies of angels in the air, accompanied by the souls of those who had fallen before Jerusalem; the latter still fighting, the former rejoicing; so that there was no longer doubt of triumph; only it still pleased Heaven that human virtue should be tried.

And now, after farther exploits on both sides, the last day of the war, and the last hope of the Infidels, arrived at the same time; for the Egyptian army came up to give battle with the Christians, and to restore Jerusalem, if possible, to its late owners, now cramped up in one corner of it—the citadel. The besiegers in their narrow hold

raised a shout of joy at the sight; and Godfrey, leaving them to be detained in it by an experienced captain, went forth to meet his new opponents. Crowns of Africa and of Persia were there, and the king of the Indies; and in the midst of all, in a chariot surrounded by her knights and suitors, was Armida.

The battle joined, and great was the bravery and the slaughter on both sides. It seemed at first all glitter and gaiety—its streamers flying, its arms flashing, drums and trumpets rejoicing, and horses rushing with their horsemen as to the tournament. Horror looked beautiful in the spectacle. Out of the midst of the dread itself there issued a delight. But soon it was a bloody, and a turbulent, and a raging, and a groaning thing:—pennons down, horses and men rolling over, foes heaped upon one another, bright armour exchanged for blood and dirt, flesh trampled, and spirit fatigued. Brave were the Pagans; but how could they stand against Heaven? Godfrey ordered every thing calmly, like a divine mind; Rinaldo swept down the fiercest multitudes, like an arm of God. The besieged in the citadel broke forth, only to let the conquerors in. Jerusalem was won before the battle was over. King after king fell, and yet the vanquished did not fly. Rinaldo went

every where to hasten the rout; and still had to fight and slay on. Armida beheld him coming where she sat in the midst of her knights; he saw her, and blushed a little: she turned as cold as ice, then as hot as fire. Her anger was doubled by the slaughter of her friends; and with her woman's hand she sent an arrow out of her bow, hoping, and yet even then hoping not, to slay or to hurt him. The arrow fell on him like a toy; and he turned aside, as she thought, in disdain. Yet he disdained not to smite down her champions. Hope of every kind deserted her. Resolving to die by herself in some lonely spot, she got down from her chariot to horse, and fled out of the field. Rinaldo saw the flight; and though one of the knights that remained to her struck him such a blow as made him reel in his saddle, he despatched the man with another like a thunderbolt, and then galloped after the fugitive.

Armida was in the act of putting a shaft to her bosom, in order to die upon it, when her arm was arrested by a mighty grasp; and turning round, she beheld with a shriek the beloved face of him who had caused the ruin of her and hers. She closed her disdainful eyes and fainted away. Rinaldo supported her; he loosened her girdle; he bathed her bosom and her eyelids with his tears. Coming

at length to herself, still she would not look at him. She would fain not have been supported by him. She endeavoured with her weak fingers to undo the strong ones that clasped her; she wept bitterly, and at length spoke, but still without meeting his eyes.

"And may I not," she said, "even die? must I be followed and tormented even in my last moments? What mockery of a wish to save me is this! I will not be watched; I believe not a syllable of such pity; and I will not be made a sight of, and a by-word. I ask my life of thee no longer; I want nothing but death; and death itself I would not receive at such hands; they would render even that felicity hateful. Leave me. I could not be hindered long from putting an end to my miseries, whatever barbarous restraint might be put upon me. There are a thousand ways of dying; and I will be neither hindered, nor deceived, nor flattered—oh, never more!"

Weeping she spoke—weeping always, and sobbing, and full of wilful words. But yet she felt all the time the arm that was round her.

"Armida," said Rinaldo, in a voice full of tenderness, "be calm, and know me for what I am—no enemy, no conqueror, nothing that intends thee shame or dishonour; but thy champion, thy re-

storer — he that will preserve thy kingdom for thee, and seat thee in house and home. Look at me—look in these eyes, and see if they speak false. And oh, would to Heaven thou wouldst indeed be as I am in faith. There isn't a queen in all the East should equal thee in glory."

His tears fell on her eyelids as he spoke — scalding tears; and she looked at him, and her heart re-opened to its lord, all love and worship; and Armida said, "Behold thy handmaid; dispose of her even as thou wilt."

And that same day Godfrey of Boulogne was lord of Jerusalem, and paid his vows on the sepulchre of his Master.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

THE DEATH OF AGRICAN.

BOIARDO.

Orlando ed Agricane un' altra fiata
  Ripreso insieme avean crudel battaglia,
La più terribil mai non fu mirata,
  L' arme l' un l' altro a pezzo a pezzo taglia.
Vede Agrican sua gente sbarattata,
  Nè le può dar aiuto, che le vaglia.
Però che Orlando tanto stretto il tiene,
Che star con seco a fronte gli conviene.

Nel suo segreto fè questo pensiero,
  Trar fuor di schiera quel Conte gagliardo;
E poi che ucciso l' abbia in su 'l sentiero,
  Tornare a la battaglia senza tardo;
Però che a lui par facile e leggiero
  Cacciar soletto quel popol codardo;
Chè tutti insieme, e 'l suo Re Galafrone,
Non li stimava quanto un vil bottone.

Con tal proposto si pone a fuggire,
  Forte correndo sopra la pianura;
Il Conte nulla pensa a quel fallire,
  Anzi crede che 'l faccia per paura.

Senz' altro dubbio se 'l pone a seguire,
E già son giunti ad una selva scura:
Appunto in mezzo a quella selva piana,
Era un bel prato intorno a una fontana.

Fermossi ivi Agricane a quella fonte,
E smontò de l' arcion per riposare,
Ma non si tolse l' elmo da la fronte,
Nè piastra, o scudo si volse levare;
E poco dimorò, che giunse 'l Conte,
E come il vide a la fonte aspettare,
Dissegli: Cavalier, tu sei fuggito,
E sì forte mostravi e tanto ardito!

Come tanta vergogna puoi soffrire,
A dar le spalle ad un sol cavaliero!
Forse credesti la morte fuggire,
Or vedi che fallito hai il pensiero;
Chi morir può onorato dee morire;
Che spesse volte avviene e di leggiero,
Che, per durar in questa vita trista,
Morte e vergogna ad un tratto s' acquista.

Agrican prima rimontò in arcione,
Poi con voce soave rispondia:
Tu sei per certo il più franco Barone,
Ch' io mai trovassi ne la vita mia,
E però del tuo scampo fia cagione
La tua prodezza e quella cortesia,
Che oggi sì grande al campo usato m' hai,
Quando soccorso a mia gente donai.

Però ti voglio la vita lasciare,
Ma non tornasti più per darmi inciampo.
Questo la fuga mi fè simulare,
Nè v' ebbi altro partito a darti scampo.
Se pur ti piace meco battagliare,
Morto ne rimarrai su questo campo;

Ma siami testimonio il cielo e 'l sole,
Che darti morte mi dispiace e duole.

Il Conte gli rispose molto umano,
Perchè avea preso già di lui pietate;
Quanto sei, disse, più franco e soprano,
Più di te mi rincresce in veritate,
Che sarai morto, e non sei Cristiano,
Ed anderai tra l' anime dannate;
Ma se vuoi il corpo e l' anima salvare,
Piglia battesmo, e lascierotti andare.

Disse Agricane, e riguardollo in viso:
Se tu sei Cristiano, Orlando sei.
Chi mi facesse Re del Paradiso,
Con tal ventura non la cangierei;
Ma sin or ti ricordo e dotti avviso,
Che non mi parli de' fatti de' Dei,
Perchè potresti predicar invano;
Difenda il suo ciascun co 'l brando in mano.

Nè più parole; ma trasse Tranchera,
E verso Orlando con ardir s' affronta.
Or si comincia la battaglia fiera,
Con aspri colpi, di taglio e di ponta;
Ciascun è di prodezza una lumiera,
E sterno insieme, com' il libro conta,
Da mezzo giorno insino a notte scura,
Sempre più franchi a la battaglia dura.

Ma poi che 'l sol avea passato il monte
E cominciossi a far il ciel stellato,
Prima verso del Re parlava il Conte;
Che farem, disse, che 'l giorno n' è andato?
Disse Agricane, con parole pronte:
Ambi ci poseremo in questo prato,
E domattina, come il giorno appare,
Ritorneremo insieme a battagliare.

Così d' accordo il partito si prese;
Lega il destrier ciascun come gli piace,
Poi sopra a l' erba verde si distese:
Come fosse tra loro antica pace,
L' uno a l' altro vicino era e palese.
Orlando presso al fonte isteso giace,
Ed Agricane al bosco più vicino
Stassi colcato, a l' ombra d' un gran pino.

E ragionando insieme tutta via
Di cose degne e condecenti a loro,
Guardava il Conte il ciel, poscia dicia:
Questo che ora veggiamo, è un bel lavoro,
Che fece la divina Monarchia,
La luna d' argento e le stelle d' oro,
E la luce del giorno e 'l sol lucente,
Dio tutto ha fatto per l' umana gente.

Disse Agricane: Io comprendo per certo,
Che tu vuoi de la fede ragionare;
Io di nulla scienza son esperto,
Nè mai sendo fanciul, volsi imparare;
E ruppi il capo al maestro mio per merto;
Poi non si potè un altro ritrovare,
Che mi mostrasse libro, nè scrittura,
Tanto ciascun avea di me paura.

E così spesi la mia fanciullezza
In caccie, in giochi d' arme e in cavalcare;
Nè mi par che convenga a gentilezza,
Star tutto il giorno ne' libri a pensare;
Ma la forza del corpo e la destrezza
Conviensi al cavaliero esercitare;
Dottrina al prete, ed al dottor sta bene;
Io tanto saccio quanto mi conviene.

Rispose Orlando: Io tiro teco a un segno,
Che l' armi son del' uomo il primo onore;

Ma non già che 'l saper faccia un men degno,
Anzi l' adorna com' un prato il fiore;
Ed è simile a un bove, a un sasso, a un legno,
Che non pensa a l' eterno Creatore;
Nè ben si puo pensar, senza dottrina,
La somma maestade, alta e divina.

Disse Agricane: Egli è gran scortesia
A voler contrastar con avvantaggio.
Io t' ho scoperto la natura mia,
E te conosco, che sei dotto e saggio;
Se più parlassi, io non risponderia;
Piacendoti dormir, dormiti ad aggio;
E se meco parlar hai pur diletto,
D' arme o d' amor a ragionar t' aspetto.

Ora ti prego, che a quel ch' io domando
Risponda il vero, a fè d' uomo pregiato;
Se tu se' veramente quell' Orlando,
Che vien tanto nel mondo nominato;
E perchè quì sei giunto, e come, e quando;
E se mai fosti ancora innamorato;
Perchè ogni cavalier, ch' è senza amore,
Se in vista è vivo, vivo senza core.

Rispose il Conte: Quell' Orlando sono,
Che uccise Almonte e' l suo fratel Troiano;
Amor m' ha posto tutto in abbandono,
E venir fammi in questo luogo strano.
E perchè teco più largo ragiono,
Voglio che sappi che 'l mio cor è in mano
De la figliuola del Re Galafrone,
Che ad Albracca dimora nel girone.

Tu fai co 'l padre guerra a gran furore,
Per prender suo paese e sua castella;
Ed io quà son condotto per amore,
E per piacer a quella damisella;

Molte fiate son stato per onore
E per la fede mia sopra la sella;
Or sol per acquistar la bella dama
Faccio battaglia, e d' altro non ho brama.

Quando Agrican ha nel parlare accolto,
Che questo è Orlando, ed Angelica amava,
Fuor di misura si turbò nel volto,
Ma per la notte non lo dimostrava;
Piangeva sospirando come un stolto,
L' anima e 'l petto e 'l spirto gli avvampava,
E tanto gelosia gli batte il core,
Che non è vivo, e di doglia non more.

Poi disse a Orlando: Tu debbi pensare,
Che come il giorno sarà dimostrato,
Debbiamo insieme la battaglia fare,
E l' uno o l' altro rimarrà su 'l prato.
Or d' una cosa ti voglio pregare,
Che, prima che vegnamo e cotal piato,
Quella donzella, che 'l tuo cor disia,
Tu l' abbandoni e lascila per mia.

Io non potria patire, essendo vivo,
Che altri con meco amasse il viso adorno:
O l' uno o l' altro al tutto sarà privo
Del spirto e de la dama al novo giorno;
Altri mai non saprà, che questo rivo
E questo bosco, ch' è quivi d' intorno,
Che l' abbi rifiutata in cotal loco
E in cotal tempo, che sarà sì poco.

Diceva Orlando al Re: Le mie promesse
Tutte ho servate, quante mai ne fei;
Ma se quel che or mi chiedi io promettesse
E s' io il giurassi, io non l' attenderei;
Così poria spiccar mie membra istesse
E levarmi di fronte gli occhi miei,

E viver senza spirto e senza core,
Come lasciar d' Angelica l' amore.

Il Re Agrican, che ardeva oltre misura,
Non puote tal risposta comportare;
Benchè sia 'l mezzo de la notte scura,
Prese Bajardo e su v' ebbe a montare,
Ed orgoglioso, con vista sicura,
Isgrida al Conte, ed ebbel a sfidare,
Dicendo: Cavalier, la dama gaglia
Lasciar convienti, o far meco battaglia.

Era già il Conte in su l' arcion salito,
Perchè, come si mosse il Re possente,
Temendo dal Pagan esser tradito,
Saltò sopra 'l destrier subitamente;
Onde rispose con animo ardito:
Lasciar colei non posso per niente;
E s' io potess, ancora io non vorria;
Avertela convien per altra via.

Come in mar la tempesta a gran fortuna,
Cominciarno l' assalto i cavalieri:
Nel verde prato, per la notte bruna,
Con sproni urtarno addosso i buon destrieri;
E si scorgeano al lume de la luna,
Dandosi colpi dispietati e fieri,
Ch' era ciascun di lor forte ed ardito:
Ma più non dico; il Canto è quì finito.

Signori e cavalieri innamorati,
Cortesi damigelle e graziose,
Venite quì davanti, ed ascoltati
L' alte avventure e le guerre amorose,

Che fer gli antiqui cavalier pregiati,
E furno al mondo degne e gloriose;
Ma sopra tutti Orlando ed Agricane
Ferno opre per amor alte e soprane.

Sì come io dissi nel Canto di sopra,
Con fier assalto dispietato e duro,
Per una dama ciaschedun s' adopra;
E ben che sia la notte e 'l ciel oscuro,
Già non vi fa mestier che alcun si scuopra,
Ma conviensi guardare e star sicuro,
E ben difeso di sopra e d' intorno,
Come il sol fosse in cielo a mezzo giorno.

Agrican combattea con più furore,
Il Conte con più senno si servava;
Già contrastato avean più di cinque ore,
E l' alba in Oriente si schiarava,
Or s' incomincia la zuffa maggiore;
Il superbo Agrican si disperava,
Che tanto contra d' esso Orlando dura,
E mena un colpo fiero oltra misura.

Giunse a traverso il colpo disperato,
E 'l scudo com' un latte al mezzo taglia;
Piagar non puote Orlando, ch' è affatato,
Ma fracassa ad un punto piastra e maglia.
Non potea il franco Conte aver il fiato,
Benchè Tranchera sua carne non taglia;
Fu con tanta ruina la percossa,
Che avea fiaccati i nervi, e peste l' ossa.

Ma non fu già per questo sbigottito,
Anzi colpisce con maggior fierezza.
Giunse nel scudo, e tutto l' ha partito,
Ogni piastra del sbergo e maglia spezza,
E nel sinistro fianco l' ha ferito;
E fu quel colpo di cotanta asprezza,

Che 'l scudo mezzo al prato andò di netto,
E ben tre coste gli tagliò nel petto.

Come rugge il leon per la foresta,
Allor che l' ha ferito il cacciatore,
Così il fier Agrican, con più tempesta,
Rimena un colpo di troppo furore;
Giunse ne l' elmo, al mezzo de la testa,
Non ebbe il Conte mai botta maggiore,
E tanto uscito è fuor di conoscenza,
Che non sa s' egli ha il capo, o s' egli è senza.

Non vedea lume per gli occhi niente,
E l' una e l' altra orecchia tintinnava;
Sì spaventato è 'l suo destrier corrente,
Ch' intorno al prato fuggendo il portava;
E sarebbe caduto veramente,
Se in quella stordigion punto durava;
Ma sendo nel cader, per tal cagione
Tornògli 'l spirto e tennesi a l' arcione.

E venne di se stesso vergognoso,
Poi che cotanto si vede avanzato.
Com' anderai, diceva doloroso,
Ad Angelica mai, vituperato?
Non ti ricordi quel viso amoroso,
Che a far questa battaglia t' ha mandato?
Ma chi è richiesto e indugia il suo servire,
Servendo poi, fa il guiderdon pefire.

Presso a dui giorni ho già fatto dimora,
Per il conquisto d' un sol cavaliero,
E seco a fronte mi ritrovo ancora,
Ne lì ho vantaggio più che 'l di primiero.
Ma, se più indugio la battaglia un' ora,
L' arme abbandono ed entro al monastero,
Frate mi faccio, e chiamomi dannato,
Se mai più brando mi fia visto allato.

Il fin del suo parlar già non e inteso,
Che batti i denti e le parole incocca;
Fuoco rassembra di furore acceso
Il fiato, ch' esce fuor di naso e bocca.
Verso Agricane se ne va disteso,
Con Durindano ad ambe mani il tocca
Sopra la spalla destra di riverso;
Tutta la taglia quel colpo diverso.

Il crudel brando nel petto dichina,
E rompe il sbergo e taglia il pancirone,
Benchè sia grosso e d' una maglia fina,
Tutto lo fende insin sotto al gallone.
Non fu veduta mai tanta ruina;
Scende la spada e guinse ne l' arcione;
D' osso era questa ed intorno ferrato,
Ma Durindana lo mandò su 'l prato.

Dal destro lato a l' anguinaglia stanca
Era tagliato il Re cotanto forte;
Perse la vista, ed ha la faccia bianca,
Come colui ch' è già giunto a la morte;
E ben che 'l spirto e 'l anima gli manca,
Chiamava Orlando, e con parole scorte
Sospirando diceva in bassa voce:
Io credo nel tuo Dio, che morì in croce.

Battezzami, Barone, a la fontana,
Prima ch' io perda in tutto la favella;
E se mia vita è stata iniqua e strana,
Non sia la morte almen di Dio ribella;
Lui, che venne a salvar in gente umana,
L' anima mia ricoglia tapinella;
Ben mi confesso che molto peccai,
Ma sua misericordia è grande assai.

Piangea quel Re, che fu cotanto fiero,
E tenea il viso al ciel sempre voltato.

Poi ad Orlando disse: Cavaliero,
In questo giorno d' oggi hai guadagnato,
Al mio parere, il più franco destriero,
Che mai fosse nel mondo cavalcato;
Questo fu tolto ad un forte Barone,
Che nel mio campo dimora prigione.

Io non mi posso ormai più sostenire;
Levami tu d' arcion, Baron accorto.
Deh non lasciar quest' anima perire!
Battezzami oramai, che già son morto!
Se tu mi lasci a tal guisa morire,
Ancor n' arai gran pena e disconforto.
Questo diceva e molte altre parole;
Oh quanto al Conte ne rincresce e duole!

Egli avea pien di lagrime la faccia,
E fu smontato in su la terra piana;
Ricolse il Re ferito ne le braccia,
E sopra 'l marmo il pose a la fontana,
E di pianger con seco non si saccia,
Chiedendogli perdon con voce umana.
Poi battezzollo a l' acqua de la fonte,
Pregando Dio per lui con le man gionte.

Poco poi stette, che l' ebbe trovato
Freddo nel viso e tutta la persona,
Onde s' avvide ch' egli era passato.
Sopra al marmor al fonte l' abbandona,
Così com' era tutto quanto armato,
Co 'l brando in mano, e con la sua corona.

No. II.

ANGELICA AND MEDORO.

ARIOSTO.

Seguon gli Scotti ove la guida loro
Per l' alta selva alto disdegno mena,
Poi che lasciato ha l' uno e l' altro Moro,
L' un morto in tutto, e l' altro vivo a pena.
Giacque gran pezzo il giovine Medoro,
Spicciando il sangue da sì larga vena,
Che di sua vita al fin saria venuto,
Se non sopravenia chi gli diè aiuto.

Gli sopravenne a caso una donzella,
Avvolta in pastorale et umil veste,
Ma di real presenzia, e in viso bella,
D' alte maniere e accortamente oneste.
Tanto è ch' io non ne dissi più novella,
Ch' a pena riconoscer la dovreste;
Questa, se non sapete, Angelica era,
Del gran Can del Catai la figlia altiera.

Poi che 'l suo annello Angelica riebbe,
Di che Brunel l' avea tenuta priva,
In tanto fasto, in tanto orgoglio crebbe,
Ch' esser parea di tutto 'l mondo schiva:
Sè ne va sola, e non si degnerebbe
Compagno aver qual più famoso viva;
Si sdegna a rimembrar che già suo amante
Abbia Orlando nomato, o Sacripante.

E, sopra ogn' altro error, via più pentita
Era del ben che già a Rinaldo volse.
Troppo parendole essersi avvilita,
Ch' a riguardar si basso gli occhi volse.

Tant' arroganzia avendo Amor sentita,
Più lungamente comportar non volse.
Dove giacea Medor, si pose al varco,
E l' aspettò, posto lo strale all' arco.

Quando Angelica vide il giovinetto
Languir ferito, assai vicino a morte,
Che del suo Re che giacea senza tetto,
Più che del proprio mal, si dolea forte.
Insolita pietade io mezo al petto
Si sentì entrar per disusate porte,
Che le fe' il duro cor tenero e molle;
E più quando il suo caso egli narrolle.

E rivocando alla memoria l' arte
Ch' in India imparò già chirurgia,
(Chè par che questo studio in quella parte
Nobile e degno e di gran laude sia;
E, senza molto rivoltar di carte,
Che 'l patre a i figli ereditario il dia)
Si dispose operar con succo d' erbe,
Ch' a più matura vita lo riserbe.

E ricordossi che passando avea
Veduta un' erba in una piaggia amena;
Fosse dittamo, o fosse panacea,
O non so qual di tal effetto piena,
Che stagna il sangue, a de la piaga rea
Leva ogni spasmo e perigliosa pena,
La trovò non lontana, e, quella côlta,
Dove lasciato avea Medor, diè volta.

Nel ritornar s' incontra in un pastore,
Ch' a cavallo pel bosco ne veniva
Cercando una iuvenca, che gli fuore
Duo dì di mandra e senza guardia giva.
Seco lo trasse ove perdea il vigore
Medor col sangue che del petto usciva;

E già n' avea di tanto il terren tinto,
Ch' era omai presso a rimanere estinto.

Del palafreno Angelica giù scese,
E scendere il pastor seco fece anche.
Pestò con sassi l'erba, indi la presse,
E succo ne cavò fra le man bianche:
Ne la piaga n' infuse, e ne distese
E pel petto e pel ventre e fin a l' anche;
E fu di tal virtù questo liquore,
Che stagnò il sangue e gli tornò il vigore:

E gli diè forza, che potè salire
Sopra il cavallo che 'l pastor condusse.
Non però volse indi Medor partire
Prima ch' in terra il suo signor non fosse,
E Cloridan col Re fe' sepelire;
E poi dove a lei piacque si ridusse;
Et ella per pietà ne l' umil case
Del cortese pastor seco rimase.

Nè, fin che nol tornasse in sanitade,
Volea partir: così di lui fe' stima:
Tanto sè inteneri de la pietade
Che n' ebbe, come in terra il vide prima.
Poi, vistone i costumi e la beltade,
Roder si sentì il cor d' ascosa lima;
Roder si sentì il core, e a poco a poco
Tutto infiammato d' amoroso fuoco.

Stava il pastore in assai buona e bella
Stanza, nel bosco infra duo monti piatta,
Con la moglie e co i figli; et avea quella
Tutta di nuovo e poco inanzi fatta.
Quivi a Medoro fu per la donzella
La piaga in breve a sanità ritratta;
Ma in minor tempo si sentì maggiore
Piaga di questa avere ella nel core.

Assai più larga piaga e più profonda
Nel cor sentì da non veduto strale,
Che da' begli occhi e da la testa bionda
Di Medoro avventò l' arcier c' ha l' ale.
Arder si sente, e sempre il fuoco abonda,
E più cura l' altrui che 'l proprio male.
Di sè non cura; e non è ad altro intenta,
Ch' a risanar chi lei fere e tormenta.

La sua piaga più s' apre e più incrudisce,
Quanto più l' altra si restringe e salda.
Il giovine si sana: ella languisce
Di nuova febbre, or agghiacciata or calda.
Di giorno in giorno in lui beltà fiorisce:
La misera si strugge, come falda
Strugger di nieve intempestiva suole,
Ch' in loco aprico abbia scoperta il sole.

Se di disio non vuol morir, bisogna
Che senza indugio ella sè stessa aïti:
E ben le par che, di quel ch' essa agogna,
Non sia tempo aspettar ch' altri la 'nviti.
Dunque, rotto ogni freno di vergogna,
La lingua ebbe non men che gli occhi arditi;
E di quel colpo domandò mercede,
Che, forse non sapendo, esso le diede.

O Conte Orlando, o Re di Circassia,
Vestra inclita virtù, dite, che giova?
Vostro alto onor, dite, in che prezzo sia?
O che mercè vostro servir ritruova?
Mostratemi una sola cortesia,
Che mai costei v' usasse, o vecchia o nuova,
Per ricompensa e guidardone e merto
Di quanto avete già per lei sofferto.

Oh, se potessi ritornar mai vivo,
Quanto ti parria duro, o Re Agricane!

Che già mostrò costei sì averti a schivo
Con repulse crudeli et inumane.
O Ferraù, o mille altri ch' io non scrivo,
Ch' avete fatto mille pruove vane
Per questa ingrata, quanto aspro vi fora
S' a costu' in braccio voi la vedesse ora!

Angelica a Medor la prima rôsa
Coglier lasciò, non ancor tocca inante;
Nè persona fu mai si avventurosa,
Ch' in quel giardin potesse por le piante.
Per adombrar, per onestar la cosa,
Si celebrò con cerimonie sante
Il matrimonio, ch' auspice ebbe Amore,
E pronuba la moglie del pastore.

Fêrsi le nozze sotto all' umil tetto
Le più solenni che vi potean farsi;
E più d' un mese poi stero a diletto
I duo tranquilli amanti a ricrearsi.
Più lunge non vedea del giovinetto
La donna, nè di lui potea saziarsi:
Nè, per mai sempre pendegli dal collo,
Il suo disir sentìa di lui satollo.

Se stava all' ombra, o se del tetto usciva,
Avea dì e notte il bel giovine a lato:
Matino e sera or questa or quella riva
Cercando andava, o qualche verde prato:
Nel mezo giorno un antro li copriva,
Forse non men di quel commodo e grato
Ch' ebber, fuggendo l' acque, Enea e Dido,
De' lor secreti testimonio fido.

Fra piacer tanti, ovunque un arbor dritto
Vedesse ombrare o fonte o rivo puro,
V' avea spillo o coltel subito fitto;
Così, se v' era alcun sasso men duro.

Et era fuori in mille luoghi scritto,
E così in casa in altri tanti il muro,
Angelica e Medoro, in varii modi
Legati insieme di diversi nodi.

Poi che le parve aver fatto soggiorno
Quivi più ch' a bastanza, fe' disegno
Di fare in India del Catai ritorno,
E Medor coronar del suo bel regno.
Portava al braccio un cerchio d' oro, adorno
Di ricche gemme, in testimonio e segno
Del ben che 'l Conte Orlando le volea;
E portato gran tempo ve l' avea.

Quel donò già Morgana a Ziliante,
Nel tempo che nel lago ascoso il tenne;
Et esso, poi ch' al padre Monodante
Per opra e per virtù d' Orlando venne,
Lo diede a Orlando: Orlando ch' era amante,
Di porsi al braccio il cerchio d' or sostenne,
Avendo disegnato di donarlo
Alla Regina sua di ch' io vi parlo.

Non per amor del Paladino, quanto
Perch' era ricco e d' artificio egregio,
Caro avuto l' avea la donna tanto
Che più non si può aver cosa di pregio.
Sè lo serbò ne l' Isola del pianto,
Non so già dirvi con che privilegio,
Là dove esposta al marin mostro nuda
Fu da la gente inospitale e cruda.

Quivi non si trovando altra mercede,
Ch' al buon pastore et alla moglie dessi,
Che serviti gli avea con sì gran fede
Dal dì che nel suo albergo si fur messi;
Levò dal braccio il cerchio, e gli lo diede,
E volse per suo amor che lo tenessi;

Indi saliron verso la montagna
Che divide la Francia da la Spagna.

Dentro a Valenza o dentro a Barcellona
Per qualche giorno avean pensato porsi,
Fin che accadesse alcuna nave buona,
Che per Levante apparecchiasse a sciorsi.
Videro il mar scoprir sotto a Girona
Ne lo smontar giù de i montani dorsi;
E, costeggiando a man sinistra il lito,
A Barcellona andâr pel camin trito.

Ma non vi giunser prima ch' un uom pazzo
Giacer trovaro in su l' estreme arene,
Che, come porco, di loto e di guazzo
Tutto era brutto, e volto e petto e schene.
Costui si scagliò lor, come cagnazzo
Ch' assalir forestier subito viene;
E diè lor noia e fu per far lor scorno.
* * * * * *

"

The troop then follow'd where their chief had gone,
Pursuing his stern chase among the trees,
And leave the two companions there alone,
One surely dead, the other scarcely less.
Long time Medoro lay without a groan,
Losing his blood in such large quantities,
That life would surely have gone out at last,
Had not a helping hand been coming past.

There came, by chance, a damsel passing there,
Dress'd like a shepherdess in lowly wise,
But of a royal presence, and an air
Noble as handsome, with clear maiden eyes.

'Tis so long since I told you news of her,
Perhaps you know her not in this disguise.
This, you must know then, was Angelica,
Proud daughter of the Khan of great Cathay.

You know the magic ring and her distress?
Well, when she had recover'd this same ring,
It so increas'd her pride and haughtiness,
She seem'd too high for any living thing.
She goes alone, desiring nothing less
Than a companion, even though a king:
She even scorns to recollect the flame
Of one Orlando, or his very name.

But, above all, she hates to recollect
That she had taken to Rinaldo so;
She thinks it the last want of self-respect,
Pure degradation, to have look'd so low.
"Such arrogance," said Cupid, "must be check'd."
The little god betook him with his bow
To where Medoro lay; and, standing by,
Held the shaft ready with a lurking eye.

Now when the princess saw the youth all pale,
And found him grieving with his bitter wound,
Not for what one so young might well bewail,
But that his king should not be laid in ground,—
She felt a something strange and gentle steal
Into her heart by some new way it found,
Which touch'd its hardness, and turn'd all to grace;
And more so, when he told her all his case.

And calling to her mind the little arts
Of healing, which she learnt in India,
(For 'twas a study valued in those parts
Even by those who were in sovereign sway,
And yet so easy too, that, like the heart's,
'Twas more inherited than learnt, they say),

She cast about, with herbs and balmy juices,
To save so fair a life for all its uses.

And thinking of an herb that caught her eye
As she was coming, in a pleasant plain
(Whether 'twas panacea, dittany,
Or some such herb accounted sovereign
For stanching blood quickly and tenderly,
And winning out all spasm and bad pain),
She found it not far off, and gathering some,
Returned with it to save Medoro's bloom.

In coming back she met upon the way
A shepherd, who was riding through the wood
To find a heifer that had gone astray,
And been two days about the solitude.
She took him with her where Medoro lay,
Still feebler than he was with loss of blood;
So much he lost, and drew so hard a breath,
That he was now fast fading to his death.

Angelica got off her horse in haste,
And made the shepherd get as fast from his;
She ground the herbs with stones, and then express'd
With her white hands the balmy milkiness;
Then dropp'd it in the wound, and bath'd his breast,
His stomach, feet, and all that was amiss:
And of such virtue was it, that at length
The blood was stopp'd, and he look'd round with strength.

At last he got upon the shepherd's horse,
But would not quit the place till he had seen
Laid in the ground his lord and master's corse;
And Cloridan lay with it, who had been
Smitten so fatally with sweet remorse.
He then obey'd the will of the fair queen;
And she, for very pity of his lot,
Went and stay'd with him at the shepherd's cot.

Nor would she leave him, she esteem'd him so,
Till she had seen him well with her own eye;
So full of pity did her bosom grow,
Since first she saw him faint and like to die.
Seeing his manners now, and beauty too,
She felt her heart yearn somehow inwardly;
She felt her heart yearn somehow, till at last
'Twas all on fire, and burning warm and fast.

The shepherd's home was good enough and neat,
A little shady cottage in a dell:
The man had just rebuilt it all complete,
With room to spare, in case more births befell.
There with such knowledge did the lady treat
Her handsome patient, that he soon grew well;
But not before she had, on her own part,
A secret wound much greater in her heart.

Much greater was the wound, and deeper far,
Which the sweet arrow made in her heart's strings;
'Twas from Medoro's lovely eyes and hair;
'Twas from the naked archer with the wings.
She feels it now; she feels, and yet can bear
Another's less than her own sufferings.
She thinks not of herself: she thinks alone
How to cure him by whom she is undone.

The more his wound recovers and gets ease,
Her own grows worse, and widens day by day.
The youth gets well; the lady languishes,
Now warm, now cold, as fitful fevers play.
His beauty heightens, like the flowering trees;
She, miserable creature, melts away
Like the weak snow, which some warm sun has found
Fall'n, out of season, on a rising ground.

And must she speak at last, rather than die?
And must she plead, without another's aid?

She must, she must: the vital moments fly:
  She lives—she dies, a passion-wasted maid.
At length she bursts all ties of modesty:
  Her tongue explains her eyes; the words are said
And she asks pity, underneath that blow
Which he, perhaps, that gave it did not know.

O County Orlando! O King Sacripant!
  That fame of yours, say, what avails it ye?
That lofty honour, those great deeds ye vaunt,—
  Say, what's their value with the lovely she
Shew me—recall to memory (for I can't)—
  Shew me, I beg, one single courtesy
That ever she vouchsafed ye, far or near,
For all you've done and have endured for her.

And you, if you could come to life again,
  O Agrican, how hard 'twould seem to you,
Whose love was met by nothing but disdain,
  And vile repulses, shocking to go through!
O Ferragus! O thousands, who, in vain,
  Did all that loving and great hearts could do,
How would ye feel, to see, with all her charms,
This thankless creature in a stripling's arms?

The young Medoro had the gathering
  Of the world's rose, the rose untouch'd before;
For never, since that garden blush'd with spring,
  Had human being dared to touch the door.
To sanction it—to consecrate the thing—
  The priest was called to read the service o'er,
(For without marriage what can come but strife?)
And the bride-mother was the shepherd's wife.

All was perform'd, in short, that could be so
  In such a place, to make the nuptials good;
Nor did the happy pair think fit to go,
  But spent the month and more within the wood.

The lady to the stripling seemed to grow.
His step her step, his eyes her eyes pursued;
Nor did her love lose any of its zest,
Though she was always hanging on his breast.

In doors and out of doors, by night, by day,
She had the charmer by her side for ever;
Morning and evening they would stroll away,
Now by some field or little tufted river;
They chose a cave in middle of the day,
Perhaps not less agreeable or clever
Than Dido and Æneas found to screen them,
When they had secrets to discuss between them.

And all this while there was not a smooth tree,
That stood by stream or fountain with glad breath,
Nor stone less hard than stones are apt to be,
But they would find a knife to carve it with;
And in a thousand places you might see,
And on the walls about you and beneath,
ANGELICA AND MEDORO, tied in one,
As many ways as lovers' knots can run.

And when they thought they had outspent their time,
Angelica the royal took her way,
She and Medoro, to the Indian clime,
To crown him king of her great realm, Cathay.[1]

[1] This version of the present episode has appeared in print before. So has a portion of the *Monks and the Giants*, in the first volume.

No. III.

THE JEALOUSY OF ORLANDO.

THE SAME.

Feron camin diverso i cavallieri,
Di quà Zerbino, e di là il Conte Orlando.
Prima che pigli il Conte altri sentieri,
All' arbor tolse, e a sè ripose il brando;
E, dove meglio col Pagan pensosse
Di potersi incontrare, il destrier mosse.

Lo strano corso che tenne il cavallo
Del Saracin pel bosco senza via,
Fece ch' Orlando andò duo giorni in fallo,
Nè lo trovò, nè pote averne spia.
Giunse ad un rivo, che parea cristallo,
Ne le cui sponde un bel pratel fioria,
Di nativo color vago e dipinto,
E di molti e belli arbori distinto.

Il merigge facea grato l' orezo
Al duro armento et al pastore ignudo;
Si che nè Orlando sentia alcun rirezo,
Che la corazza avea, l' elmo e lo scudo.
Quivi egli entrò, per riposarsi, in mezo;
E v' ebbe travaglioso albergo e crudo,
E, più che dir si possa, empio soggiorno,
Quell' infelice e sfortunato giorno.

Volgendosi ivi intorno, vidi scritti
Molti arbuscelli in su l' ombrosa riva.
Tosto che fermi v' ebbe gli occhi e fitti,
Fu certo esser di man de la sua Diva.

Questo era un di quei lochi già descritti,
Ove sovente con Medor veniva
Da casa del pastore indi vicina
La bella donna del Catai Regina.

Angelica e Medor con cento nodi
Legati insieme, e in cento lochi vede.
Quante lettere son, tanti son chiodi
Co i quali Amore il cor gli punge e fiede.
Va col pensier cercando in mille modi
Non creder quel ch' al suo dispetto crede:
Ch' altra Angelica sia, creder si sforza,
Ch' abbia scritto il suo nome in quella scorza.

Poi dice: Conosco io pur queste note;
Di tal io n' ho tante e vedute e lette.
Finger questo Medoro ella si puote;
Forse ch' a me questo cognome mette.
Con tali opinion dal ver remote
Usando fraude a sè medesmo, stette
Ne la speranza il mal contento Orlando,
Che si seppe a sè stesso ir procacciando.

Ma sempre più raccende e più rinuova,
Quanto spenger più cerca, il rio sospetto;
Come l' incauto augel che si ritrova
In ragna o in visco aver dato di petto,
Quanto più batte l' ale e più si prova
Di disbrigar, più vi si lega stretto.
Orlando viene ove s' incurva il monte
A guisa d' arco in su la chiara fonte.

Aveano in su l' entrata il luogo adorno
Coi piedi storti edere e viti erranti.
Quivi soleano al più cocente giorno
Stare abbracciati i duo felici amanti.
V' aveano i nomi lor dentro e d' intorno
Più che in altro de i luoghi circonstanti,

Scritti, qual con carbone e qual con gesso,
E qual con punte di coltelli impresso.

Il mesto Conte a piè quivi discese;
E vide in su l' entrata de la grotta
Parole assai, che di sua man distese
Medoro avea, che parean scritte allotta.
Del gran piacer che ne la grotta prese,
Questa sentenzia in versi avea ridotta:
Che fosse culta in suo linguaggio io penso;
Et era ne la nostra tale in senso:

Liete piante, verdi erbe, limpide acque,
Spelunca opaca e di fredde ombre grata,
Dove la bella Angelica, che nacque
Di Galafron, da molti in vano amata,
Spesso ne le mie braccia nuda giacque;
De la commodità che quì m' è data,
Io povero Medor ricompensarvi
D' altro non posso, che d' ognior lodarvi:

E di pregare ogni signore amante
E cavallieri e damigelle, e ognuna
Persona o paësana o viandante,
Che quì sua volontà meni o Fortuna,
Ch' all' erbe, all' ombra, all' antro, al rio, alle piante
Dica: Benigno abbiate e sole e luna,
E de le nimfe il coro che provveggia,
Che non conduca a voi pastor mai greggia.

Era scritta in Arabico, che 'l Conte
Intendea così ben, come Latino.
Fra molte lingue e molte ch' avea pronte
Prontissima avea quella il Paladino
E gli schivò più volte e danni et onte,
Che si trovò tra il popul Saracino.
Ma non si vanti, se già n' ebbe frutto;
Ch' un danno or n' ha, che può scontargli il tutto.

Tre volte, e quattro, e sei, lesse lo scritto
Quello infelice, e pur cercando in vano
Che non vi fosse quel che v' era scritto;
E sempre lo vedea più chiaro e piano;
Et ogni volta in mezo il petto afflitto
Stringersi il cor sentia con fredda mano.
Rimase il fin con gli occhi e con la mente
Fissi nel sasso, al sasso indifferente.

Fu allora per uscir del sentimento;
Sì tutto in preda del dolor si lassa.
Credete a chi n' ha fatto esperimento,
Che questo è 'l duol che tutti gli altri passa.
Caduto gli era sopra il petto il mento,
La fronte priva di baldanza, e bassa;
Nè pote aver (chè 'l duol l' occupò tanto)
Alle querele voce, o umore al pianto.

L' impetuosa doglia entro rimase,
Che volea tutta uscir con troppa fretta.
Così veggian restar l' acqua nel vase,
Che largo il ventre e la bocca abbia stretta;
Chè, nel voltar che si fa in su la base,
L' umor, che vorria uscir, tanto s' affretta,
E ne l' angusta via tanto s' intrica,
Ch' a goccia a goccia fuore esce a fatica.

Poi ritorna in sè alquanto, e pensa come
Possa esser che non sia la cosa vera:
Che voglia alcun così infamare il nome
De la sua donna e crede e brama e spera,
O gravar lui d' insopportabil some
Tanto di gelosia, che sè ne pera;
Et abbia quel, sia chi si voglia stato,
Molto la man di lei bene imitato.

In così poca, in così debol speme
Sveglia gli spirti, e gli rifranca un poco;

Indi al suo Brigliadoro il dosso preme,
Dando già il sole alla sorella loco.
Non molto va, che da le vie supreme
De i tetti uscir vede il vapor del fuoco,
Sente cani abbaiar, muggiare armento ;
Viene alla villa, e piglia alloggiamento.

Languido smonta, e lascia Brigliadoro
A un discreto garzon che n' abbia cura.
Altri il disarma, altri gli sproni d' oro
Gli leva, altri a forbir va l' armatura.
Era questa la casa ove Medoro
Giacque ferito, e v' ebbe alta avventura.
Corcarsi Orlando e non cenar domanda,
Di dolor sazio e non d' altra vivanda.

Quanto più cerca ritrovar quiete,
Tanto ritrova più travaglio e pene ;
Chè de 'l odiato scritto ogni parete,
Ogni uscio, ogni finestra vede piena.
Chieder ne vuol : poi tien le labra chete ;
Chè teme non si far troppo serena,
Troppo chiara la cosa, che di nebbia
Cerca offuscar, perchè men ηηocer debbia.

Poco gli giova usar fraude a sè stesso ;
Chè senza domandarne è chi ne parla.
Il pastor, che lo vede così oppr[illegible]so
Da sua tristrizia, e che vorria levarla,
L' istoria nota a sè che dicea spesso
Di quei duo amanti a chi volea ascoltarla,
Ch' a molti dilettevole fu a udire,
Gl' incominciò senza rispetto a dire :

Come esso a prieghi d' Angelica bella,
Portato avea Medoro alla sua villa ;
Ch' era ferito gravemente, e ch' ella
Curò la piaga, e in pochi dì guarilla :

Ma che nel cor d' una maggior di quella
Lei ferì amor: e di poca scintilla
L' accese tanto e sì cocente fuoco,
Che n' ardea tutta, e non trovava loco.

E, sanza aver rispetto ch' ella fosse
Figlia del maggior Re ch' abbia il Levante,
Da troppo amor constretta si condusse
A farsi moglie d' un povero fante.
All ultimo l' istoria si ridusse,
Che 'l pastor fe' portar la gemma inante,
Ch' alla sua dipartenza, per mercede
Del buono albergo, Angelica gli diede.

Questa conclusion fu la secure
Che 'l capo a un colpo gli levò dal collo,
Poi che d' innumerabil battiture
Si vide il manigoldo Amor satollo.
Celar si studia Orlando il duolo; e pure
Quel gli fa forza, e male asconder puollo;
Per lacrime e suspir da bocca e d' occhi
Convien, voglia o non voglia, al fin che scocchi.

Poi ch' allagare il freno al dolor puote
(Che resta solo, e senza altrui rispetto),
Giù da gli occhi rigando per le gote
Spargo un fiume di lacrime su 'l petto:
Sospira e geme, e va con spesse ruote
Di quà di là tutto cercando il letto;
E più duro ch' un sasso, e più pungente
Che se fosse d' urtica, sè lo sente.

In tanto aspro travaglio gli soccorre,
Che nel medesmo letto in che giaceva
L' ingrata donna venutasi a porre
Col suo drudo più volte esser doveva.
Non altrimenti or quella piuma abborre
Nè con minor prestezza sè ne leva,

Che de l' erba il villan, che s' era messo
Per chiuder gli occhi, e veggà il serpe appresso.

Quel letto, quella casa, quel pastore
Immantinente in tant' odio gli casca,
Che senza aspettar luna, o che l' albore
Che va dinanzi al nuovo giorno, nasca,
Piglia l' arme e il destriero, et esce fuore
Per mezo il bosco alla più oscura frasca;
E quando poi gli e avviso d' esser solo,
Con gridi et urli apre le porte al duolo.

Di pianger mai, mai di gridar non resta;
Nè la notte nè 'l dì si dà mai pace;
Fugge cittadi e borghi, e alla foresta
Su 'l terren duro al discoperto giace.
Di sè si maraviglia ch' abbia in testa
Una fontana d' acqua sì vivace,
E come sospirar possa mai tanto;
E spesso dice a sè così nel pianto:

Queste non son più lacrime, che fuore
Stillo da gli occhi con sì larga vena.
Non suppliron le lacrime al dolore;
Finir, ch' a mezo era il dolore a pena.
Dal fuoco spinto ora il vitale umore
Fugge per quella via ch' a gli occhi mena;
Et è quel che si versa, e trarrà insieme
E 'l dolore e la vita all' ore estreme.

Questi, ch' indizio fan del mio tormento,
Sospir non sono; nè i sospir son tali.
Quelli han triegua talora; io mai non sento
Che 'l petto mio men la sua pena esali.
Amor, che m' arde il cor, fa questo vento,
Mentre dibatte intorno al fuoco l' ali.
Amor, con che miracolo lo fai,
Che 'n fuoco il tenghi, e nol consumi mai?

Non son, non sono io quel che paio in viso;
  Quel, ch' era Orlando, è morto, et è sotterra;
La sua donna ingratissima l' ha ucciso;
  Sì, mancando di fe, gli ha fatto guerra.
Io son lo spirito suo da lui diviso,
  Ch' in questo inferno tormentandosi erra,
Acciò con l' ombra sia, che sola avanza,
Esempio a chi in amor pone speranza.

Pel bosco errò tutta la notte il Conte;
  E allo spuntar della diurna fiamma
Lo tornò il suo destin sopra la fonte,
  Dove Medoro insculse l' epigramma.
Veder l' ingiuria sua scritta nel monte
  L' accese sì, ch' in lui non restò dramma
Che non fosse odio, rabbia, ira e furore;
Nè più indugiò, che trasse il brando fuore.

Tagliò lo scritto e 'l sasso, e sin al cielo
  A volo alzar fe' le minute schegge.
Infelice quell' antro, et ogni stelo
  In cui Medoro e Angelica si legge!
Così restâr quel dì, ch' ombra nè gielo
  A pastor mai non daran più, nè a gregge:
E quella fonte già si chiara e pura,
Da cotanta ira fu poco sicura:

Che rami, e ceppi, e tronchi, e sassi, e zolle
  Non cessò di gittar ne le bell' onde,
Fin che da sommo ad imo sì turbolle
  Che non furo mai più chiare nè monde;
E stanco al fin, e, al fin di sudor molle,
  Poi che la lena vinta non risponde
Allo sdegno, al grave odio, all' ardente ira,
Cade sul prato, e verso il ciel sospira.

Afflitto e stanco al fin cade ne l' erba,
  E ficca gli occhi al cielo, e non fa motto;

Senza cibo e dormir così si serba,
Che 'l sole esce tre volte, e torna sotto.
Di crescer non cessò la pena acerba,
Che fuor del senno al fin l' ebbe condotto.
Il quarto dì, da gran furor commosso,
E maglie e piastre si stracciò di dosso.

Quì riman l' elmo, e là riman lo scudo;
Lontan gli arnesi, e più lontan l' usbergo:
L' arme sue tutte, in somma vi concludo,
Avean pel bosco differente albergo.
E poi si squarciò i panni, e mostrò ignudo
L' ispido ventre, e tutto 'l petto e 'l tergo;
E cominciò la gran follia, si orrenda,
Che de la più non sarà mai ch' intenda.

In tanta rabbia, in tanto furor venne,
Che rimase offuscato in ogni senso.
Di tor la spada in man non gli sovvenne,
Che fatte avria mirabil cose, penso.
Ma nè quella nè scure nè bipenne
Era bisogno al suo vigore immenso.
Quivi fe' ben de le sue prove eccelse;
Ch' un alto pino al primo crollo svelse;

E svelse dopo il primo altri parecchi,
Come fosser finocchi, ebuli o aneti;
F fe' il simil di querce e d' olmi vecchi,
Di faggi e d' orni e d' illici a d' abeti;
Quel ch' un uccellator, che s' apparecchi
Il campo mondo, fa, per por le reti,
De i giunchi e de le stoppie e de l' urtiche,
Facchi de cerri e d' altre piante antiche.

I pastor, che sentito hanno il fracasso,
Lasciando il gregge sparso alla foresta,
Chi di quà, chi di là, tutti a gran passo
Vi vengono a veder che cosa è questa.

* * * * *

The poet breaks off here, and enters afterwards at large into the consequences of the madness of Orlando; omitted in this work, for the reasons mentioned at page 224.

No. IV.

THE DEATH OF CLORINDA.

TASSO.

Ma, ecco omai l' ora fatale è giunta
Che 'l viver di Clorinda al suo fin deve.
Spinge egli il ferro nel bel sen di punta,
Che vi s' immerge, e 'l sangue avido beve;
E la veste che d' or vago trapunta
Le mammelle stringea tenera e leve
L' empie d' un caldo fiume. Ella già sente
Morirsi, e 'l piè le manca egro e languente.

Quel segue la vittoria, e la trafitta
Vergine minacciando incalza e preme:
Ella, mentre cadea, la voce afflitta
Movendo, disse le parole estreme:
Parole ch' a lei novo un spirto ditta,
Spirto di fè, di carità, di speme:
Virtù ch' or Dio le infonde; e se rubella
In vita fu, la vuole in morte ancella:

Amico, hai vinto; io ti perdon: perdona
Tu ancora, al corpo no, che nulla pave,
All' alma sì: deh! per lei prega: e dona
Battesmo a me ch' ogni mia colpe lave.
In queste voci languide risuona
Un non so che di flebile e soave,
Che al cor gli serpe, ed ogni sdegno ammorza,
E gli occhi a lagrimar gl' invoglia e sforza.

Poco quindi lontan nel sen del monte
Scaturía mormorando un picciol rio:
Egli v' accorse, e l' elmo empiè nel fonte,
E tornò mesto al grande ufficio e pio.
Tremar sentì la man, mentre la fronte,
Non conosciuta ancor, sciolse e scoprio.
La vide, e la conobbe; e restò senza
E voce, e moto. Ahi vista! ahi cognoscenza!

Non morì già; che sue virtuti accolse
Tutte in quel punto, e in guardia al cor le mise;
E, premendo il suo affanno, a dar si volse
Vita coll' acqua a chi col ferro uccise.
Mentre egli il suon de' sacri detti sciolse,
Colei di gioia trasmutossi, e rise:
E in atto di morir lieto e vivace,
Dir parea; S' apre il cielo; io vado in pace.

D' un bel pallore ha il bianco volto asperso,
Come a gigli sarian miste viole;
E gli occhi al cielo affisa, e in lei converso
Sembra per la pietate il cielo e 'l sole;
E la man nuda e fredda alzando verso
Il cavaliero, in vece di parole,
Gli dà pegno di pace. In questa forma
Passa la bella donna, e par che dorma.

Come l' alma gentile uscita ei vede,
Rallenta quel vigor ch' avea raccolto,
E l' imperio di sè libero cede
Al duol già fatto impetuoso e stolto,
Ch' al cor si stringe, e chiusa in breve sede
La vita, empie di morte i sensi e 'l volto.
Già simile all' estinto il vivo langue
Al colore, al silenzio, agli atti, al sangue.

E ben la vita sua sdegnosa e schiva,
Spezzando a sforza il suo ritegno frale,

La bell' anima sciolta alfin seguiva,
Che poco innanzi a lei spiegava l' ale ;
Ma quivi stuol de' Franchi a caso arriva,
Cui trae bisogno d' acqua, o d' altro tale ;
E con la donna il cavalier ne porta,
In sè mal vivo, e morto in lei ch' è morta.

No V.

TANCRED IN THE ENCHANTED FOREST.

THE SAME.

Era in prence Tancredi intanto sorto
A seppellir la sua diletta amica;
E, benchè in volto sia languido e smorto,
E mal atto a portar elmo e lorica,
Nulladimen, poi che 'l bisogno ha scorto,
Ei non ricusa il rischio o la fatica ;
Chè 'l cor vivace il suo vigor trasfonde
Al corpo sì, che par ch' esso n' abbonde.

Vassene il valoroso in sè ristretto,
E tacito e guardingo al rischio ignoto :
E sostien della selva il fero aspetto,
E 'l gran romor del tuono e del tremoto ;
E nulla sbigottisce ; e sol nel petto
Sente, ma tosto il seda, un picciol moto.
Trapassa ; ed ecco in quel silvestre loco
Sorge improvvisa la città del foco.

Allor s' arretra, e dubbio alquanto resta,
Fra sè dicendo : Or qui che vaglion l'armi ?
Nelle fauci de' mostri, e 'n gola a questa
Divoratrice fiamma andrò a gettarmi ?

Non mai la vita, ove cagione onesta
Del comun pro la chieda, altri risparmi ;
Ma nè prodigo sia d' anima grande
Uom degno ; e tale è ben chi qui la spande.

Pur l' oste che dirà, s' indarno io riedo ?
Qual altra selva ha di troncar speranza ?
Nè intentato lasciar vorrà Goffredo
Mai questo varco. Or, s' oltre alcun s' avanza,
Forse l' incendio, che qui sorto i' vedo,
Fia d' effetto minor che sembianza ;
Ma seguane che puote. E in questo dire
Dentro saltovvi : oh memorando ardire !

Nè sotto l' arme già sentir gli parve
Caldo o fervor come di foco intenso ;
Ma pur, se fosser vere fiamme o larve,
Mal potè giudicar sì tosto il senso :
Perchè repente, appena tocco, sparve
Quel simulacro, e giunse un nuvol denso,
Che portò notte e verno ; e 'l verno ancora
E l' ombra dileguossi in picciol' ora.

Stupido sì, ma intrepido rimane,
Tancredi ; e poichè vede il tutto cheto,
Mette securo il piè nelle profane
Soglie, e spia della selva ogni secreto.
Nè più apparenze inusitate e strane,
Nè trova alcun per via scontro o divieto,
Se non quanto per sè ritarda il bosco
La vista e i passi, inviluppato e fosco.

Alfine un largo spazio in forma scorge
D' anfiteatro, e non è pianta in esso,
Salvo che nel suo mezzo altero sorge,
Quasi eccelsa piramide, un cipresso.
Colà si drizza, e nel mirar s' accorge
Ch' era di varj segni il tronco impresso,

Simil a quei, chè in vece usò di scritto
L' antico già misterioso Egitto.

Fra i segni ignoti alcune note ha scorte
Del sermon di Soria, ch' ei ben possiede:
Ò tu, che dentro ai chiostri della morte
Osasti por, guerriero audace, il piede,
Deh! se non sei crudel, quanto sei forte,
Deh! non turbar questa secreta sede.
Perdona all' alme omai di luce prive:
Non dee guerra co' morti aver chi vive.

Così dicea quel motto. Egli era intento
Delle brevi parole ai sensi occulti.
Fremere intanto udia continuo il vento
Tra le frondi del bosco e tra i virgulti;
E trarne un suon che flebile concento
Par d' umani sospiri e di singulti;
E un non so che confuso instilla al core
Di pietà, di spavento e di dolore.

Pur tragge alfin la spada, e con gran forza
Percote l' alta pianta. Oh maraviglia!
Manda fuor sangue la recisa scorza,
E fa la terra intorno a sè vermiglia.
Tutto si raccapriccia; e pur rinforza
Il colpo, e 'l fin vederne ei si consiglia.
Allor, quasi di tomba, uscir ne sente
Un indistinto gemito dolente;

Che poi distinto in voci: Ahi troppo, disse,
M' hai tu, Tancredi, offesso: or tanto basti:
Tu dal corpo, che meco e per me visse,
Felice albergo già, mi discacciasti.
Perchè il misero tronco, a cui m' affisse
Il mio duro destino, ancor mi guasti?
Dopo la morte gli avversarj tuoi,
Crudel, ne' lor sepolcri offender vuoi?

Clorinda fui: nè sol qui spirto umano
Albergo in questa pianta rozza e dura;
Ma ciascun altro ancor, Franco o Pagano,
Che lassi i membri a piè dell' alte mura,
Astretto è qui da novo incanto e strano,
Non so s' io dica in corpo o in sepoltura.
Son di sensi animati i rami e i tronchi;
E micidial sei tu, se legno tronchi.

Qual infermo talor, ch' in sogno scorge
Drago, o cinta di fiamme alta Chimera,
Sebben sospetta, o in parte anco s' accorge
Che simulacro sia non forma vera,
Pur desia di fuggir, tanto gli porge
Spavento la sembianza orrida e fera:
Tale il timido amante appien non crede
Ai falsi inganni: e pur ne teme, e cede:

E dentro il cor gli è in modo tal conquiso
Da varj affetti, che s' agghiaccia e trema;
E nel moto potente ed improvviso
Gli cade il ferro: e 'l manco è in lui la tema.
Va fuor di sè. Presente aver gli è avviso
L' offesa donna sua, che plori e gema:
Nè può soffrir di rimirar quel sangue,
Nè quei gemiti udir d' egro che langue.

Così quel contra morte audace core
Nulla forma turbò d' alto spavento;
Ma lui, che solo è fievole in amore,
Falsa imago deluse e van lamento.
Il suo caduto ferro instanto fuore
Portò del bosco impetuoso vento,
Sicchè vinto partissi; e in sulla strada
Ritrovò poscia, e ripigliò la spada.

Pur non tornò, né ritentando ardio
Spiar di novo le cagioni ascose;

E poi che, giunto al sommo Duce, unio
Gli spirti alquanto, e l' animo compose,
Incominciò: Signor, nunzio son io
Di non credute e non credibil cose.
Ciò che dicean dello spettacol fero,
E del suon paventoso, è tutto vero.

Maraviglioso foco indi m' apparse,
Senza materia in un istante appreso;
Che sorse, e, dilatando un muro farse
Parve, e d' armati mostri esser difeso.
Pur vi passai; chè nè l' incendio m' arse,
Nè dal ferro mi fu l' andar conteso:
Vernò in quel punto, ed annottò: fe' il giorno
E la serenità poscia ritorno.

Di più dirò; ch' agli alberi dà vita
Spirito uman, che sente e che ragiona.
Per prova sollo: io n' ho la voce udita,
Che nel cor flebilmente anco mi suona.
Stilla sangue de' tronchi ogni ferita,
Quasi di molle carne abbian persona.
No, no, più non potrei (vinto mi chiamo)
Nè corteccia scorzar, nè sveller ramo.

THE END.

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